

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE IMPACT OF GUILT ON
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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People feel guilt when they harm others. Research on guilt has found its mixed effects on interpersonal relationships. The current dyadic study investigates the primary hypothesis that two facets of guilt expression: sharing repair motivations and elaborating on transgression details, have offsetting effects on outcomes through their influence on victim's perceptions. Perpetrators described an incident in which they expressed guilt to a partner (victims), and both parties completed measures regarding the incident. Results suggest that perpetrators who feel guilty expressed more repair motivations and more wrongdoing, and victims' perceptions of the incident were connected to personal and relational outcomes. However, victims and perpetrators did not agree on perpetrators' expressions of wrongdoing or repair motivation, suggesting that guilt may often have weak or mixed effects because it is not always accurately detected. In addition, several moderators of the links between guilt, guilt expression, and victims' perceptions of the conflict were identified.

THE IMPACT OF GUILT ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

by

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Introduction

Background

Guilt is an interpersonal emotion that arises when people believe that they have caused harm to (typically close) others (Lewis, 1971). A widely used definition describes guilt as concern, tension, remorse and regret over a specific behavior that can be considered hurtful by others (Tangney, 1993). There is noticeable conflict in the prior literature on the consequences of guilt (Tangney, 1993). The current research aims to address that conflict and uncover the pathways through which guilt may have both positive and negative effects on interpersonal relationships while addressing possible reasons for the inconsistency of prior results. More specifically, the primary hypothesis of this study centers on the multidimensional nature of perpetrators' expression of guilt and victims' interpretations of that expression. The current research investigates the primary hypothesis that one component of the expressions of guilt - expressing repair motivation – strengthens relationships by increasing victims' belief that the perpetrator will make amends and repair the relationship. In contrast, another component of the expression of guilt - expressions of wrongdoing – may harm relationships by increasing victims' perceptions of the severity of perpetrators' harmful behavior. The current research is a contribution to the literature on guilt investigating a novel explanation for the inconsistencies of its positive effects. In addition, the current research also includes a secondary investigation of factors that might influence perpetrators' preferred guilt expression strategy and victims' perceptions of different strategies. More specifically, I hypothesize that perpetrators' perfectionistic self-presentation, communal strength and authenticity are factors which could potentially lead them to rely more or less heavily on

expressing a desire to make amends relative to discussing their transgression in detail when expressing their guilt. Moreover, I hypothesize that victim perceptions of the perpetrators' transgression and amend history and victims' self-esteem and attachment style might influence their interpretations of perpetrators' expression style and perceptions about the wrongdoing. Ancillary analysis investigated additional characteristics that might moderate the relationship between perpetrator expression and victim perceptions and the possibility that victim's perceptions of severity and their belief that the perpetrator would make amends interact in predicting consequences. This hypothesis is in line with prior research suggesting that victim and perpetrators recall and interpret hurtful events differently and both assessments are important for predicting personal and relational outcomes (Feeney & Hill, 2006).

According to a social functionalist perspective on emotion, guilt is usually socially adaptive (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). According to this perspective, individuals (or "perpetrators") feel guilt when they commit a harmful act towards someone they are motivated to maintain a relationship with. This guilt is thought to, in turn, motivate perpetrators' prosocial behaviors towards the victim of the harmful act, which should compensate for the harm done and strengthen the relationship (Nesse, 1990). In addition, a perpetrator's expression of guilt could signal to the victim that the perpetrator values the relationship and wants to repair it. Guilt appears to be stronger and more common in cases in which the perpetrator and the victim are in a communal relationship, a relationship in which partners are motivated to attend to each other's needs and are concerned with each other's welfare (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1994).

Guilt's proposed function suggests that expressing this emotion in situations when

a transgression has been committed may have a positive effect on interpersonal relationships and psychological functioning. Indeed, guilt has been linked to many positive outcomes for guilty individuals, including low self-reported anger and reduced aggression (Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher & Gramzow, 1992), constructive responses to anger (Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, Gramzow & Richard, 1996) and even lower levels of substance abuse problems (Dearing, Stuewig & Tangney, 2005). Tangney's (1992) analysis of guilt incidents revealed that those incidents were overwhelmingly social in nature and associated with positive outcomes for guilty individuals and their relationship partners. This may be the case because guilt often motivates prosocial behaviors (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1995), more ethical choices (Cohen, Panter & Turan, 2012), altruism (Haidt, 2003) and better interpersonal problem solving (Covert, Tangney, Maddux & Heleno, 2003). Additionally, inducing guilt in others has been reported as a successful manipulation technique that can effectively motivate perpetrators to enact pro-relationship behaviors (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1995). Moreover, guilt has been implicated as a mediator of the relationship-enhancing effects of empathy (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). That is, taking other people's perspectives during conflicts produces better relationship outcomes in part because perspective-taking increases guilt. Combined, these findings suggest that guilt can have powerful personal and interpersonal benefits.

However, some studies fail to find a significant relationship between guilt and positive outcomes (Noel, 1973; Silverman, 1967). In a recent preliminary study, participants reported on incidents in which they expressed specific emotions to a relationship partner. In this study, incidents involving the expression of guilt were not

characterized by positive relationship outcomes (Teneva & Lemay, 2017). Furthermore, some empirical evidence has linked guilt to negative personal and interpersonal outcomes. For example, guilt-proneness is related to psychopathology (Kim, Thibodeau & Jorgensen, 2011; Harder, Cutler & Rockart, 1992) and self-punishment (Nelissen & Zeelenberg, 2009; Nelissen, 2012; Inbar, Pizarro, Gilovich & Ariely, 2013; Van Kleef, De Dreu & Manstead, 2006). In addition, individuals high in attachment anxiety have been shown to induce more guilt in their partners leading to the said partners' lower relationship satisfaction (Overall, Girme, Lemay & Hammond, 2014). Some researchers have even connected guilt to undesirable interpersonal outcomes such as lower quality social networks (Jones & Kugler, 1993). Hence, some evidence suggests that guilt is not unambiguously good for relationships and can perhaps even be harmful. There is noticeable conflict in the prior literature on the consequences of guilt. The current research primarily aims to address that conflict and uncover the pathways through which guilt may have positive and negative effects on interpersonal relationships while addressing possible reasons for the inconsistency of prior results.

When people feel guilty, they often express a desire to make amends for their behavior. In other words, they demonstrate an attempt to accept responsibility, offer a sincere apology and enact pro-relationship behaviors as reparation for their transgression (Hannon, Rusbult, Finkel & Kamashiro, 2010). This component of guilt expression may largely be responsible for the benefits of guilt. When guilty individuals express a desire to make amends, this increases the likelihood that victims will forgive them (Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). In addition, the extent to which a perpetrator makes amends for the committed transgression has been shown to play an

important role in betrayal resolution (Hannon et al., 2010). Expressed desire to make amends by perpetrators has also been shown to increase the success of apologies and to lead to less negative emotions for victims following an apology (Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama & Shirvani, 2008). Additionally, some studies have found apologies not followed by an expression of desire to make amends by the perpetrator to be ineffective and even to be predictive of more negative evaluations of the perpetrator compared to perpetrators who did not apologize (Zechmeister et al., 2004). Children reported that they would feel better about a particular transgression only if the perpetrator made up for it but not if they received only an apology (Drell & Jaswal, 2015). Over time, offers of amends by perpetrators ensure that victims who forgive do not suffer from eroded self-respect (Luchies, Finkel, McNulty & Kumashiro, 2010) and provide victims with confidence that perpetrators will not repeat their transgressions (McCullough, Pedersen, Tabak, & Carter, 2014).

Most theorists define forgiveness as the removal of negative emotion in conjunction with the increase in positivity in attitudes and behaviors by a victim towards an offender after a transgression. Forgiveness is usually the desired outcome from both parties after a transgression and it plays a key role in repairing damage caused by harmful events (McCullough, Root, Tabak & Witvliet, 2009; Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). In addition, forgiveness has been linked to multiple positive outcomes for the victim such as reduced anxiety and depression (e.g. Coyle & Enright, 1997; Freedman & Enright, 1996) and physical health benefits (e.g., Witvliet, Ludwig, & VanderLaan, 2001) as well as more positive emotions for the transgressor (Riek & Mania, 2011). Additionally, forgiveness has been shown to predict sustained relationship satisfaction in the face of

partner transgressions (Fincham, Hall & Beach, 2006). Given the benefits of the expression of a desire to make amends and its close connection to forgiveness, this expression by a perpetrator after relational transgressions could be yielding many of the positive relationship outcomes associated with guilt.

However, guilt expression is not limited to communication of the desire to make amends by the perpetrator. When people feel guilt, they often disclose and elaborate upon the harmful act that led them to feeling that guilt (Pansera & La Guardia, 2011). For example, victims of romantic infidelity usually find out about their romantic partner's transgression through their partner's confession (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1995). Finding out about hurtful events usually leads to negative emotions for the victim and can lead to lower relationship satisfaction or even relationship dissolution (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell & Evans, 1998). In fact, previous work has shown that apologies can be ineffective (Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009). This finding might be partially explained by the fact that when people apologize, they remind the victims of the transgression that led to the apology. Moreover, in-depth discussion about a transgression could lead victims to discover new information regarding the perpetrator's hurtful behavior, encourage them to make internal attributions for the behavior, and lead them to appraise the behavior as more harmful, which can cause negative relationship outcomes (Ohbuchi, Kameda & Agarie, 1989; Zechmeister et al., 2004). When perpetrators discuss their transgressions, they may remind victims of this negative behavior, circumventing victims' common tendencies to forget the behavior or misremember perpetrators' behavior as more benign than it really was (Lemay & Neal, 2013; Luchies et al., 2013). Moreover, even in the absence of biased memories, victims

might deal with feelings of anger and hurt that arise from their partner's transgression by using distractions that allow them to think less about the hurtful event (Rusting & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Neumann, Waldsten, Sellers, Thayer & Sorkin, 2004; Ayduk, Mendoza-Denton, Mischel, Downey, Peake & Rodriguez, 2000), which would be undercut by perpetrators who discuss their transgressions when expressing their guilt. Thus, expression of guilt can have negative relationship consequences because it often involves discussing and elaborating on a particularly harmful act.

Having identified these potential countervailing pathways for the effect of guilt, it is important to consider factors that may shape the relative emphasis on transgressions and repair motivation in expressions of guilt. In the current research, as secondary hypotheses, I consider perfectionistic self-presentation, communal strength and relationship authenticity as three such possible factors.

Perfectionistic self-presentation is a style of self-presentation that includes actively displaying one's positive characteristics that could enhance one's reputation and avoiding verbal admission and behavioral demonstration of one's negative characteristics that could tarnish one's reputation (Hewitt et al., 2003). Given that repair motivation is valued by others and committing transgressions is not, individuals who adopt a perfectionistic self-presentation style might be more likely to express repair motivation when feeling guilty but downplay or ignore the details about their transgression in order to preserve their self-image. Perfectionistic self-presentation has been found to be related to fear of public expression of anxiety (Flett, Greene & Hewitt, 2004) and might display a similar relationship to fear of public expression of a transgression, given that admitting to doing something wrong usually presents the perpetrator in a negative light and might

even reduce their chances of receiving forgiveness (Afifi, Falato & Weiner, 2001). Thus, perfectionistic self-presentation of the perpetrator might influence their choice of a guilt expression strategy.

In addition, communal strength of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim might influence the choice of guilt expression strategy. Individuals in relationships high in communal strength show great concern about their partners' needs and emotional welfare (Mills, Clark, Ford & Johnson, 2004). Thus, they are likely to want their partners to feel loved and cared for and strive to provide that feeling. Perpetrators in strong communal relationship might actively express repair motivation when communicating their guilt to their partners because of the likelihood of that strategy to reassure their partner that they are cherished. Moreover, individuals in strong communal relationships might downplay their transgressions or try to avoid talking about them when expressing guilt because of the possibility that such a discussion might waver their partner's belief that they are cared for. Communal strength has been previously linked to more enacted pro-relationship behaviors and might have a similar effect in situations involving expression of guilt (Mattingly, Oswald & Clark, 2011).

Moreover, the perpetrator's relationship authenticity might influence their expression of guilt. Authenticity in relationships has been identified as the extent to which one engages authentically with partners (Wickham, Reed & Williamson, 2015). In other words, people who exhibit authenticity in relationships are more likely to self-disclose personal information, avoid presenting a "false-self" and avoid being deceitful or omitting the truth. They are also more likely to value these qualities in others (Lopez & Rice, 2006). It is likely that perpetrators high in authenticity in relationships discuss their

transgressions in more detail since they value openness and truthfulness and want their partners to see their “true-self” even when it is characterized by flaws (Kernis & Goldman, 2005).

Thus, perfectionistic self-presentation, communal strength and authenticity are factors which could potentially lead perpetrators to place more or less emphasis on expressing a desire to make amends relative to discussing their transgression in detail when expressing their guilt.

An additional under-explored source of variation in consequences of guilt expressions may involve individual differences in victims and is explored as a set of secondary hypothesis in the current research. Positive effects of guilt expression likely depend on victims believing that perpetrators truly want to make amends, and that their transgressions were not highly severe. There are many possible determinants of victims’ ability or inability to entertain such beliefs.

For example, victims are possibly less likely to believe that their partner would make amends if they believe their partner has committed multiple transgressions in the past and has not made an effort to make up for them, as people form expectations based on past behaviors (Gagné & Lydon, 2004). That might be particularly true for longstanding relationships where partners increasingly rely on diagnostic information as opposed to momentary judgments of partner behavior perhaps because they become increasingly confident in how well they know each other (Thomas, Fletcher & Lange, 1997).

In addition, personal characteristics of the victim might influence their tendency to believe in the likelihood of the perpetrator making amends and to see the transgression

as particularly severe. For instance, individuals with lower self-esteem and individuals with insecure attachment styles (i.e., a disposition to fear abandonment and rejection) have been shown to trust their partners less (Mikulincer, 1998; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Simpson, 1990), which could affect their belief that the partner wants to amend the harmful act and their perception that a transgression is irrevocably harmful to the relationship. Although it might be crucial for the partner who committed a transgression in a relationship to express a desire to make amends for that transgression, it is important that the victim perceives that this desire is genuine and will in actuality lead to actions making up for the transgression in order for the two partners to experience the positive effects of guilt expression.

Prior research has not distinguished expressing repair motivation and disclosing transgressions as two types of communications that may have countervailing interpersonal consequences when people feel guilty and the current study is filling this gap.. In addition, the current research explores various factors that might influence perpetrators' choice of guilt expression strategy as well as victim's interpretations of perpetrators' guilt expression. Moreover, the current research design is also controlling for established explanations for the mixed effects of guilt found in prior literature.

Prior Research on the Mixed Effects of Guilt

Prior research has identified some of the reasons for the mixed effects of guilt. One explanation has centered on the co-occurring effects of shame. Tangney (1995) demonstrated that many people have difficulty differentiating between guilt and shame, or they often experience both emotions in particular situations. While both guilt and shame are mainly interpersonal in nature and related to the realization that one has

breached an internalized moral or social norm, shame is uniquely related to the tendency to make stable negative self-attributions. Guilt tends to be associated with positive outcomes, while shame usually has negative consequences (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Thus, the tendency for people to confuse these two emotions, and the possibility that these emotions are experienced in close succession in some situations, might have contributed to the inconsistent results in the research on guilt. Moreover, in some rare cases, people are likely to also confuse guilt and embarrassment, a distinct emotion related to sense of exposure and conspicuousness (Tangney et al., 1996), further complicating the investigation of the unique effects of guilt. The current research measures and controls for perpetrators' feelings of situational shame and embarrassment in order to tease apart the effects of guilt from these other prosocial emotions.

Another drawback of most guilt research is that situational guilt, guilt related to a specific negative behavior in a unique situation, and dispositional guilt, a general tendency to feel guilty, are usually used interchangeably. A meta-analysis of guilt-focused research revealed that dispositional guilt is usually linked to negative outcomes, while situational guilt mostly has beneficial consequences (Tignor & Colvin, 2016). Measures assessing dispositional guilt do not typically assess guilt in particular circumstances, while measures of situational guilt usually measure guilt experienced in specific real or hypothetical situations (Averill, Diefenbach, Stanley, Breckenridge, & Lusby, 2002). However, prior research has used both types of measures to achieve conclusions about situational guilt which could be leading to the observed ambiguous results. The current research measures the perpetrators' dispositional guilt as well as the perpetrators' dispositional shame and embarrassment as control factors allowing to

disentangle the effects of dispositional tendencies to feel prosocial emotions from those of feelings of situational guilt.

Current Research

Primary Hypothesis. The current research primarily tests another explanation for why guilt may have mixed positive and negative effects while controlling for past findings. This explanation centers on the multidimensional nature of perpetrators' expression of guilt and victims' interpretations of that expression. The current research investigates the primary hypothesis that the two main facets of guilt expression by the perpetrator: sharing repair motivations and elaborating on transgression details, have offsetting effects on personal and relational outcomes through their influence of victims' perceptions. This hypothesis is outlined in Figure 1.

To better understand the mixed interpersonal effects of guilt expression, this project teases apart the effects of processes of expression of wrongdoing and the expression of repair motivations on relationship outcomes following a relationship transgression. Moreover, this study controls for variables related to other explanations for the mixed findings on guilt (i.e., dispositional guilt, shame and embarrassment, and situational shame and situational embarrassment).

The hypothesized model of the effect of guilt on relationship outcomes appears below in Figure 1. "P" refers to the perpetrator, in other words, the individual who committed a harmful act toward their relationship partner "V", or victim, and may feel guilty about it. P's experienced guilt is expected to be positively related to P's expression of wrongdoing or admitting and discussing in detail the act that made P feel guilty (path A) and P's expression of repair motivation related to the transgression (path B). Support

for these paths would suggest that expression of wrongdoing and expression of repair motivation are typical components of guilt expression. In turn, the expression of wrongdoing is expected to inform V of the harmful act and focus V's attention on the harmful act. Hence, this expression is expected to increase V's perception of the severity of P's wrongdoing (path C). In contrast, P's expression of repair motivation should increase V's belief that P will truly make amends (path D). Finally, V's belief that P would make amends should increase the measured relationship outcomes, such as V's reported forgiveness and both partners' evaluations of the relationship change due to the transgression (path F). In contrast, V's perception of the severity of P's wrongdoing should decrease those relationship outcomes (path E). In sum, this model suggests that one component of the expressions of guilt - expressing repair motivation – strengthens the relationships by increasing victims' perceptions of perpetrators' intentions to make amends. In contrast, another component of the expression of guilt - expressions of wrongdoing – may harm relationships by increasing perpetrators' perceptions of the severity of victims' harmful behavior. The current study evaluates the model outlined in Figure 1. This model controls for situational and dispositional feelings of shame and embarrassment and dispositional feelings of guilt in order to tease apart effects of situational guilt.

Secondary Hypotheses – Influences on Perpetrator's Guilt Expression

Strategy. As a secondary hypothesis, moderators of model paths A and B were also examined. P's perfectionistic self-presentation and their communal strength were hypothesized to strengthen the link between P's experienced guilt and P's expression of repair motivation (Path B) and weaken the link between P's experienced guilt and P's

expression of wrongdoing (Path A), while P's authenticity in relationships is hypothesized to strengthen the link between P's experienced guilt and P's expression of wrongdoing (Path A). In addition, communal strength and perfectionistic self-presentation are hypothesized to increase expressing repair motivation and decrease expressing wrongdoing (main effects). Relationship authenticity, on the other hand, is hypothesized to increase expression of wrongdoing (main effect).

Secondary Hypotheses – Influences on Victim's Perceptions. V's attachment insecurity, low self-esteem, and perception that P has a history of engaging in wrongdoing and not amending for their behavior should result in stronger negative effects of P's expression on wrongdoing on relationship outcomes (Paths C), and weaker positive effects of P's expression of repair motivation (Path D). In addition, these variables may have main effects, such that insecure and low self-esteem victims, and victims who perceive P to have a history of wrongdoing, may see P's wrongdoing as more severe and have less confidence in P's intent to make amends.

Ancillary analysis – Additional Influences on Victim's Perceptions. As ancillary analysis, I examined V's communal feelings, perfectionistic self-presentation and relationship authenticity as moderators of the effects of P's expression on wrongdoing on relationship outcomes and the positive effects of P's expression of repair motivation (paths C and D). In addition, I examined their main effects on V's perceptions of the severity of the incident and of V's belief that P would make amends.

Prior research suggests that communal strength in relationships is associated with higher tendencies for forgiveness and lower desire for avoidance and revenge of a close other who has committed a hurtful act (McCullough, Root & Cohen, 2006). Thus, victims

who have strong communal feelings towards perpetrators might be more likely to believe the perpetrator will make amends after their expression of repair motivation and less likely to perceive the incident as more severe after the perpetrator's expression of wrongdoing (paths C and D). In addition, prior research suggests that communal feelings might prompt motivated cognition and seeing the partner as more responsive in close relationships (Lemay & Clark, 2015; Lemay, Clark & Feeney, 2007). Thus, V's communal feelings towards P might also directly lead to V's perception of lower incident severity and V's higher belief that P would make amends (main effects).

Another factor influencing the victim's impressions might be their relationship authenticity. People high in relationship authenticity try to be honest in close relationships and value the same quality in their partners (Lopez & Rice, 2006). Thus, victims high in relationship authenticity might be particularly likely to value perpetrators' expression of wrongdoing (path C) given that that expression includes transgression confession and elaboration which are often perceived as honest (Roggensack & Sillars, 2014). In addition, victims high in relationship authenticity might be less likely to value elaborate apologies (path D) because of their tendency to seem disingenuous and exaggerated (Struthers et al., 2008).

Moreover, victims high in perfectionistic self-presentation might be particularly likely to value and believe in expression of repair motivation (path D) and disvalue expression of wrongdoing (path C). People high in perfectionistic self-presentation are overly concerned with their public image and looking desirable in society (Hewitt, Habke, Lee-Baggle, Sherry & Flett, 2008). In addition, they react very negatively to discussion of their past mistakes (Hewitt et al., 2008). Thus, victims high in

perfectionistic self-presentation might have a similar reaction to the discussion of their partners' mistakes because they might feel ashamed that they have been the target of such behavior (Beck et al., 2011). However, these victims might also highly value expressions of repair motivation from their partner because they are more socially acceptable and show that they are valuable to their partner (Oshtubo & Yagi, 2015).

Thus, the current research includes ancillary analysis on V's perfectionistic self-presentation, relationship authenticity and communal feelings towards P as moderators of the relationship between P's perceptions of expression and V's perceptions of incident severity (path C) and belief that P would make amends (path D).

Ancillary analysis – Interaction of Victims' Perceptions in Predicting

Outcomes. Ancillary analysis was performed to investigate whether V's perceptions of incident severity and their belief that P would make amends interacted in predicting outcomes. Past research suggests that expressing a desire to make amends is a central feature of effective apologies (Zechmeister et al., 2004). Thus, it is possible that believing that the perpetrator would make amends might alleviate some of the negative effects of perceptions of incident severity on relationship outcomes. In addition, an incident perceived as highly severe by the victim that is not accompanied by the victim's belief that the perpetrator will make amends might be particularly detrimental because of the lack of assurance for the victim that the perpetrator cares about the relationship and wants to repair it (Pansera, 2012). Thus, the current research investigates the possibility that V's perceptions of incident severity and their belief that the perpetrator would make amends interact in predicting personal and relationship outcomes.

Method

Participants

A sample of 103 dyads (206 participants) received course credit and compensation of up to \$5 in exchange for participation in the current study. For analysis purposes, 22 dyads were excluded for various reasons including perpetrators not following prompt directions, victims not remembering the incidents identified by perpetrators, failed attention check, and incorrect role assignment, resulting in 81 dyads or 162 participants (M age = 19.69, SD = 1.47). The sample was racially diverse (Caucasian: 54.4%; Asian: 21.8%; Hispanic: 9.5%; African American: 6.1%; Native American: 0.7%; Other: 7.5%). Of the participants who provided their gender 36.7% identified as male, and 63.3% identified as female. Of the participating dyads 55.6% were friends, 11.1% were roommates and 33.3% were romantic partners. On average, participants had known each other for a little under 3 years before the study (M = 31.11 months, SD = 43.25). Incidents that were identified by perpetrators had occurred averagely about 7 months prior to participation in the study (M = 7.04 months, SD = 10.65)

Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants completed a short pre-survey assessing some dispositional characteristics before arriving to the laboratory with their study partner. There, participants completed a battery of measures individually before one of them was randomly assigned the role of perpetrator. The perpetrator was instructed to think about a time that they felt guilty and expressed that guilt towards their

study partner, the victim, and to write down enough information about the incident to make it recognizable without revealing any new details. Perpetrators were advised to choose a non-trivial incident, an incident with higher severity that is memorable for both partners, and they were given examples of such incidents upon request. The researcher then presented the victim with the description of an incident written by the perpetrator and both participants answered a battery of measures about the described incident before being debriefed.

Measures

Pre-survey Measures

Trait self-esteem measure. Both partners completed a measure of trait self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The measure includes 10 items (e.g. “ I am satisfied with myself”). Items were completed using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). This is a widely used measure that has demonstrated good test-retest reliability over different periods of time ($r = .69$) as well as construct validity (Robins, Hendin & Trzesniewski, 1999). In addition, the items were internally consistent ($\alpha = .91$). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix A.

Dispositional guilt. In addition, both partners completed a trait measure designed to evaluate how often they felt guilty generally choosing how frequently they feel guilty, regretful, blameworthy, repentant and remorseful (procedure is adapted from Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert & Barlow, 1998). Items were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*never*; 5 = *always*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .81$). The measure is presented in Appendix B.

Dispositional shame. In addition, both partners completed a trait measure designed to evaluate how often they felt shame generally choosing how frequently they feel ashamed, humiliated, disgraced, mortified and disappointed with themselves (procedure is adapted from Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert & Barlow, 1998). Items were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*never*; 5 = *always*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .83$). The measure is presented in Appendix B.

Dispositional embarrassment. Additionally, both partners completed a trait measure designed to evaluate how often they felt embarrassed generally choosing how frequently they feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, self-conscious, blushful and awkward (procedure is adapted from Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert & Barlow, 1998). Items were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*never*; 5 = *always*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .82$). The measure is presented in Appendix B.

Own transgression history measure. Both partners completed 5 items about their history of transgressions in the relationship (e.g. “I have often hurt my partner”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .71$). This measure is developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix C.

Partner transgression history measure. Both partners completed 5 items assessing their partners’ history of transgressions in the relationship (e.g. “My partner has often hurt me”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .84$). This measure is developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix C.

Own amends history measure. In addition, both partners completed 5 items about the extent to which they have made amends for their own transgressions in the past (e.g. “I try to make up for any distress I might have caused my partner”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and exhibited adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .66$). This measure is developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix C.

Partner amends history measure. Moreover, both partners completed 5 items about the extent to which they have made amends for their own transgressions in the past (e.g. “My partner always makes amends for their hurtful actions towards me”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .82$). This measure is developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix C.

Lab Session Common Measures

Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale. The victim and the perpetrator each completed the Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale (Hewitt et al., 2003) indicating how much they agree with 27 items (e.g. “I hate to make errors in public”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .91$). This measure has demonstrated good test-retest reliability over different periods of time ($r = .81$) (Hewitt et al., 2003). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix D.

Communal Strength Measure. Both participants also completed the Communal Strength Measure (Mills et al., 2004) which includes 10 items (e.g. “How happy do you feel when doing something that helps your partner?”). Participants responded to each

statement on a 100-point slider (1 = *not at all*; 100 = *extremely*) and items were internally consistent ($\alpha = .80$). The measure has demonstrated good concurrent and predictive validity (Mills et al., 2004). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix E.

Attachment Insecurity. In addition, both participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships measure (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) and indicated how much they agreed with statements measuring attachment anxiety (e.g. “I worry about being rejected or abandoned”) and attachment avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent for both attachment anxiety ($\alpha = .89$) and attachment avoidance ($\alpha = .90$). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix F.

Authenticity in Close Relationships. Both study partners completed selected items from the Authenticity in Relationships scale (Lopez & Rice, 2006) indicating how much they agreed with 14 statements (e.g. “I am totally myself when I am with my close others.”). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .74$). The original longer measure has demonstrated good test-retest reliability ($r > .70$) and good predictive validity (Lopez & Rice, 2006). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix G.

Lab Session Perpetrator Measures

Situational guilt measure. Additionally, perpetrators completed a measure of their guilt related to the incident. They indicated how extremely they felt each of the emotions listed in the dispositional guilt measure as a result of their transgression. Items

were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*not at all intense*; 5 = *extremely intense*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .90$). The measure is presented in Appendix H.

Situational shame measure. Perpetrators were also prompted to evaluate their shame related to the incident indicating how extremely they felt each of the emotions listed in the dispositional shame measure as a result of their transgression. Items were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*not at all intense*; 5 = *extremely intense*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .84$). The measure is presented in Appendix H.

Situational embarrassment measure. Moreover, perpetrators were prompted to evaluate their embarrassment related to the incident indicating how extremely they felt each of the emotions listed in the dispositional embarrassment measure as a result of their transgression. Items were completed using a 5-point scale (1=*not at all intense*; 5 = *extremely intense*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .85$). The measure is presented in Appendix H.

Transgression severity measure. In order to assess the subjective severity of the transgression, perpetrators indicated how much they agreed with 4 statements “The incident was painful”, “The incident was serious”, “The incident was severe” and “The incident was harmful” about the incident they described. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .92$). This measure is adapted from McCullough, Root & Cohen (2006) and can be found in Appendix I.

Measure of perception of expression of wrongdoing. Perpetrators indicated the extent to which they thought they expressed wrongdoing following the event using a 15-item multidimensional measure including 5 questions about the extent to which they

provided details about the transgression (e.g. “ I described vividly exactly what I did”), 5 questions about the extent to which they admitted to the behavior (e.g. “ I discussed my wrongdoing with my partner”) and 5 questions about the extent to which they acknowledged they made a mistake (e.g. “I admitted that what I did was wrong”.) Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .94$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study can be found in Appendix J.

Measure of expression of repair motivation. Perpetrators indicated the extent to which they thought they expressed repair motivation following the event using a 15-item multidimensional measure including 5 questions about the extent to which they expressed a desire to make amends for the transgression (e.g. “ I promised to changed my behavior towards my partner”), 5 questions about the extent to which they indicated that they would not repeat the behavior (e.g. “I promised I wouldn’t repeat the behavior”) and 5 questions about the extent to which they expressed care for their partner despite the transgression (e.g. “I expressed concern for my partners’ welfare”.) Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .93$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix K.

Measure of perception of victim’s belief in amends The perpetrators indicated their impressions of the victim’s beliefs that they were going to make amends on an 8-item scale (e.g. “My partner believed that the transgression wouldn’t occur again). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were

internally consistent ($\alpha = .92$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix L.

Short-term outcomes. The perpetrators also completed 9 items assessing how the relationship between them and their partner changed as a result of the incident in the short term (e.g. “Our relationship is stronger as a result of this incident”). They were instructed to think only of the immediate consequences following the transgression. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .97$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix M.

Long-term outcomes. The perpetrators also completed analogous 9 items assessing how the relationship between them and their partner changed as a result of the incident in the long term (e.g. “I felt closer to my partner as a result of this incident.”). They were instructed to think of the long-term consequences of the transgression and not just of their immediate reactions. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .97$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix N.

Lab Session Victim Measures

Transgression severity measure. In order to assess the subjective severity of the transgression, victims indicated how much they agreed with 4 statements “The incident was painful”, “The incident was serious”, “The incident was severe” and “The incident was harmful” about the incident the perpetrator described. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha =$

.92). This measure is adapted from McCullough, Root & Cohen (2006) and can be found in Appendix I.

Measure of perception of expression of wrongdoing. Victims indicated the extent to which they thought the perpetrators expressed wrongdoing following the event on a 15-item multidimensional measure analogous to the one completed by perpetrators. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .94$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study can be found in Appendix J.

Measure of perception expression of repair motivation. Victims indicated the extent to which they thought their partner expressed repair motivation following the event on a 15-item multidimensional measure analogous to the one completed by perpetrators. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .92$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study can be found in Appendix K.

Measure of perception of victim's belief in amends The victims indicated their beliefs that the perpetrator was going to make amends on a measure analogous to the one completed by perpetrators. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .96$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix L.

Short-term outcomes. The victims also completed 9 items assessing how the relationship between them and their partner changed as a result of the incident in the short term analogous to the one completed by the perpetrator. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent (α

= .98). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix M.

Long-term outcomes. The victims completed 9 items assessing how the relationship between them and their partner changed as a result of the incident in the long term analogous to the one completed by the perpetrator as well. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .97$). This measure was developed for the purpose of the current study and can be found in Appendix N.

Forgiveness. Victims also reported on how much they forgave the perpetrator for the transgression using the 12-item Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale (e.g. “I withdraw from my partner”) (McCullough et al., 1998). Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) and were internally consistent ($\alpha = .81$). This measure has demonstrated good concurrent validity as well as adequate test-retest reliability for its Avoidance ($r = .44$) and Revenge ($r = .53$) subscales (McCullough et al., 1998). The measure and scoring instructions are presented in Appendix O.

Demographics and Relationship Measures

Both participants were asked to provide their gender, age and race. In addition, both participants identified the type of relationship between them (friends, romantic partners, roommate or others), the length of the relationship in months and the time passed since the incident identified by the perpetrator. In addition, victims were asked if they could recall the incident identified by the perpetrator.

Objective Coder Ratings

Three objective coders including the researcher; rated the transcribed accounts of the perpetrator's transgression on a 4-item measure of severity analogous to the one completed by the victim and perpetrator. Coders indicated how much they agreed with 4 statements "The incident was painful", "The incident was serious", "The incident was severe" and "The incident was harmful" about the incident perpetrators described. Items were completed on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). Ratings across the 4 items were averaged to create an index of overall severity as assessed by each coder. Two-way random Intraclass Correlation Coefficients were computed to determine inter-rater reliability as recommended for cases with more than two raters (Koo & Li, 2016). There was excellent inter-rater reliability for these indexes (ICC = .79). In addition, averages for each item across coders were calculated and showed internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$). The average of all ratings made by all coders was used as a measure of objective severity.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Regression analyses were used to examine associations among model variables. Preliminary analysis did not confirm the hypothesized model outlined in Figure 1. Many of the predicted associations did not emerge. Hence, no follow up using path analysis was performed. In addition to testing associations predicted by the model depicted in Figure 1, ancillary analyses were conducted to examine other possible predictors of model variables. Reported coefficients are unstandardized. Models were tested using the Linear Regression command in SPSS (24). There were some missing responses due to missing pre-survey data. Means for variables relevant to the study which were affected by missing data were replaced with relative series means, a technique that has proven effective for questions measured on Likert-type scales (Raaijmakers, 1999). There were no significant problems with skewness and kurtosis for the major predictors in the proposed model. The sample did not significantly violate the recommended thresholds of -2 and 2 for both skewness and kurtosis (George & Mallery, 2010) in terms of guilt expressed by the perpetrator, $\gamma_1 = -.16$; $\kappa = -1.01$, the perpetrator's perception of expression of wrongdoing, $\gamma_1 = -.55$; $\kappa = -.07$, the victim's perception of transgression severity, $\gamma_1 = .29$; $\kappa = -1.08$, and the victim's belief that the perpetrator would make amends, $\gamma_1 = -.82$; $\kappa = .58$, indicating the distribution was not significantly different than the normal distribution. There was a violation of the kurtosis assumption in terms of the perpetrator's perception of expression of repair motivation, $\gamma_1 = -1.18$; $\kappa = 2.85$. However, the method used in the current study, linear regression, does not require normally distributed predictors and outcomes, so no adjustment was necessary (Montgomery & Peck, 1982). Correlations

among variables in the proposed model are included in Table 1. Generally, estimated paths from the model outlined in Figure 1 did not differ by gender and relationship type. Thus, results include all participants. For paths that differed by gender or relationship type, the conditional estimates are presented in footnotes.

Partner Agreement

Perpetrators and victims were asked analogous questions related to the perpetrator's guilt expression and the incident in order to determine partner agreement. Although the two partners' perceptions about the severity of the transgression described by the perpetrator were significantly positively correlated, $r = .59; p < .001$, and both the perpetrator and victim's ratings were significantly positively correlated with the ratings of the objective coders, $r = .48; p < .001$; $r = .55; p < .001$, the partners did not agree about (i.e., no significant association between) how much the perpetrator expressed wrongdoing, $r = .14; p = .243$, or repair motivation, $r = .07; p = .529$. However, the victim's belief that the perpetrator would make amends and the perpetrator's perception of this belief were positively correlated, $r = .32; p = .005$. Finally, the two partners' perceptions of the extent to which the perpetrator had hurt the victim in the past were significantly correlated, $r = .30; p = .006$, but their ratings of the extent the perpetrator had made amends for past transgressions were not, $r = .16; p = .172$. All correlations are partial and the analysis controls for the time passed since the incident.

Factor Analysis of Guilt Expression Style Outcomes

A principal component factor analysis, using an Equamax final rotation technique, was conducted using P's scores for the 6 subscales making up the measures of P's

expression of wrongdoing and P's expression of repair motivation to determine whether the responses represented two factors. Following guidelines to extract enough factors to explain 75% of the total variance (Costello & Osborne, 2005), a 2-factor solution was achieved. The solution is outlined in Table 2a. However, the Repeat subscore violated recommendations that item loadings on multiple factors should have a minimal difference of .2 (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Thus, this subscore was eliminated and analogous exploratory principal factor analysis was performed resulting in a new 2-factor solution outlined in Table 2b. This solution was used to compute averages of guilt expression style. A variable assessing P's expression of wrongdoing was computed by averaging the detail, admit and mistake subscores, and a variable assessing P's expression of repair motivation was computed by averaging the care and amend subscores.

Guilt as Predictor of Partner Outcomes

I assessed the overall effect of guilt on the five outcomes that were measured – P's short-term outcomes; P's long-term outcomes; V's short-term outcomes; V's long-term outcomes and V's forgiveness of P. In each model, I controlled for the severity of the incident by using a composite measure averaging the perceptions of severity of the victim, perpetrator and objective coders. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. In addition, the model includes measures of situational shame and embarrassment as well as dispositional guilt, shame and embarrassment as controls. P's feelings of guilt did not significantly predict their own short-term or long-term outcomes, $p = .689$; $p = .426$. Moreover, P's feelings of guilt did not significantly predict V's short-term or long-term outcomes, $p = .321$; $p = .332$. Finally, P's guilt did not significantly predict V's forgiveness of P, $p = .202$.

Primary Hypothesis – Paths A & B; P’s Guilt as Predictor of P’s Guilt Expression Style

To assess paths A and B in the model proposed in Figure 1, I created two models using P’s situational guilt to predict P’s perception of expressing wrongdoing and repair motivation respectively. In each model, I controlled for the severity of the incident by using a composite measure averaging the perceptions of severity of the victim, perpetrator and objective coders. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. In addition, the model included measures of situational shame and embarrassment as well as dispositional guilt, shame and embarrassment as controls. The models are summarized in Table 3. P’s feelings of guilt significantly predicted P’s perception of expressing wrongdoing, $b = .31$; $t = 2.21$; $p = .031$, and P’s perception of expressing repair motivation, $b = .42$; $t = 3.45$; $p = .001$. That is, perpetrators who felt guilty were more likely to claim to have expressed wrongdoing and repair motivation.

Primary Hypothesis – Paths C & D; P’s Guilt Expression Style as a Predictor of V’s Perceptions

To perform preliminary analysis on paths C and D in the model proposed in Figure 1, I created a model using P’s perception of expressing wrongdoing to predict V’s perception of the incident severity, and a model using P’s perception of expressing repair motivation to predict V’s belief that P would make amends. Both models include P’s feelings of situational guilt. In each model, I controlled for situational shame and embarrassment as well as dispositional guilt, shame and embarrassment and a composite variable averaging observers’ and perpetrators’ ratings of incident severity representing

objective severity. In addition, I investigated the interaction between objective severity and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing in predicting V's perception of the incident severity by adding a product term of the two predictors in the first model. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. V's belief that P would make amends was not significantly predicted by P's perception of their own expression of amends, $p = .734$ or P's feelings of situational guilt, $p = .954$. In addition, V's perception of the severity of the transgression was not significantly predicted by P's perception of their own expression of wrongdoing, $p = .957$, although it was predicted by objective severity, $b = .85$; $t = 6.65$; $p < .001$. However, there was no significant interaction between objective severity and P's perception of their own expression of wrongdoing in predicting V's perception of the incident severity, $p = .791$.

Primary Hypothesis – Paths E & F; V's Perceptions as Predictors of Relationship

Outcomes

To perform preliminary analysis on paths E and F in the model proposed in Figure 1, I created models using V's perception of the severity of the incident and V's belief that P would make amends to predict all measured outcomes while controlling for P's situational guilt, P's perception of their own expression of wrongdoing and P's perception of expressing repair motivation. In each model, I controlled for situational shame and embarrassment as well as dispositional guilt, shame and embarrassment. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. Results are summarized in Table 4.

P's short-term outcomes. P's short-term outcomes were not predicted by V's perception of the severity of the incident, $p = .643$, or V's belief that P would make

amends, $p = .364$.² However, P's perceptions of their own expression of repair motivation predicted marginally better short-term outcomes for them, $b = .47$; $t = 1.98$; $p = .052$.

P's long-term outcomes. P's long-term outcomes were not predicted by V's perception of the severity of the incident, $p = .165$. However, V's belief that P would make amends predicted marginally better long-term outcomes for P, $b = .22$; $t = 1.79$; $p = .078$. In addition, P's situational guilt was associated with worse long-term outcomes for P, $b = -.39$; $t = -2.12$; $p = .038$. P's perception of expressing repair motivation predicted their better long-term outcomes, $b = .60$; $t = 3.17$; $p = .003$.

V's short-term outcomes. V's short-term outcomes were not predicted by V's perception of the severity of the incident, $p = .762$. However, V's belief that P would make amends was associated with better short-term outcomes for V, $b = .69$; $t = 4.68$; $p < .001$.

V's long-term outcomes. V's long-term outcomes were not predicted by V's perception of the severity of the incident, $p = .669$. However, V's belief that P would make amends was associated with better long-term outcomes for V, $b = .71$; $t = 5.32$; $p < .001$.

Forgiveness. Finally, V's perception of the severity of the incident was associated with lower forgiveness, $b = -.09$; $t = -2.91$; $p = .005$, and V's belief that P would make amends was associated with higher forgiveness, $b = .24$; $t = 5.34$; $p < .001$.³

Secondary Hypotheses: Moderators of the Effect of P's Guilt on P's Expression Style

Next, I performed tests of moderators by examining main effects of the moderators described earlier on P's expression style before adding these moderators and

product terms representing interactions between predictors and moderators to the models to test the effects of P's guilt on P's expression style. All models control for P's situational and dispositional feelings of prosocial emotions. Significant interactions were probed by examining conditional effects at 1 SD below and above levels of the moderating variable.

Communal strength. P's communal strength did not significantly predict how much they perceived expressing wrongdoing, $p = .143$. In addition, P's communal strength and P's guilt did not interact significantly, $p = .971$, to predict P's perception of expression of wrongdoing. P's communal strength predicted P's marginally higher perception of expressing repair motivation $b = .02$, $t = 1.75$, $p = .084$. In addition, P's feelings of communal strength marginally significantly moderated the effects of P's guilt on their perception of expressing repair motivation, $b = .02$; $t = 1.86$; $p = .067$. This interaction is plotted in Figure 2. P's guilt predicted P's stronger perception of expressing repair motivation for perpetrators high in communal strength, $b = .52$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$, but not for perpetrators low in communal strength, $p = .271$, and communal strength predicted P's stronger perception of expressing repair motivation when perpetrators felt relatively guilty, $b = .04$, $t = 2.51$, $p = .014$, but not when they felt relatively low guilt, $p = .413$.

Perfectionistic self-presentation. P's perfectionistic self-presentation predicted P's marginally lower perception of expressing wrongdoing, $b = -.20$, $t = -1.70$, $p = .094$. However, P's perfectionistic self-presentation did not predict their perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .692$. Moreover, P's perfectionistic self presentation did

not interact with their feelings of guilt to predict their perception of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .778$, or repair motivation, $p = .898$.

Authenticity in relationships. P's authenticity in relationships did not significantly predict how much they perceived expressing wrongdoing, $p = .778$, or repair motivation, $p = .329$. In addition, P's authenticity did not interact with their feelings of guilt in predicting how much they perceived expressing wrongdoing, $p = .277$, or repair motivation, $p = .917$.

Secondary Hypotheses: Moderators of the Effect of P's Guilt Expression Style on V's Perceptions

Next, I performed tests of moderators by examining main effects of the moderators described earlier on V's perceptions before adding these moderators and product terms representing interactions between predictors and moderators to the models to test the effects of P's guilt expression style on V's perceptions. All models control for P's situational and dispositional feelings of prosocial emotions. In addition, to control for accuracy, all models include a composite variable averaging observers' and perpetrators' ratings of incident severity representing objective severity and both facets of P's guilt expression perceptions. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. Significant interactions were probed by examining conditional effects at 1 SD below and above levels of the moderating variable.

Self-esteem. Although V's self-esteem predicted V's higher belief that P would make amends, $b = .65$; $t = 2.08$; $p = .042$, there was no interaction between self-esteem and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .986$, or P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .142$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends. In

addition, V's self-esteem did not predict their perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .255$, and there was no significant interaction between V's self-esteem and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .442$, or P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .959$, in predicting V's perception of the severity of the transgression.

Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. V's attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance did not significantly predict their belief that P would make amends, $p = .186$; $p = .906$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between either V's attachment anxiety or avoidance with P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .589$; $p = .953$, or between V's attachment avoidance and P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .352$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends. However, V's attachment anxiety and P's perception of expressing repair motivation interacted marginally significantly, $b = .33$; $t = 1.69$; $p = .097$, to predict V's belief that P would make amends. This interaction is plotted in Figure 3. P's perception of expressing repair motivation did not predict V's belief that P would make amends significantly for either victims high, $p = .752$, or low in attachment anxiety, $p = .281$. In addition, V's attachment anxiety did not predict V's belief that P would make amends significantly either when P had a perception they expressed high, $p = .353$, or low, $p = .738$, repair motivation. V's attachment anxiety predicted V's marginally higher perception of the severity of the transgression, $b = .31$; $t = 1.82$; $p = .073$. However, there was no significant effect of V's attachment avoidance on their perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .785$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between either V's attachment anxiety or avoidance with P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .498$; $p = .673$, and P's

perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .956$; $p = .184$ in predicting V's belief that P would make amends.

History of P's transgressions. V's perception of how much P had hurt them in the past did not significantly predict their belief that P would make amends, $p = .345$. However, V's perception of how much P had made amends for past transgressions predicted V's higher belief that P would make amends for the specific transgression, $b = .57$; $t = 2.60$; $p = .012$. There was no significant interaction between either V's perception of how much P hurt them in the past or V's perception of how much P made amends in the past with P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .686$; $p = .529$, or with P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .419$; $p = .158$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends. In addition, V's perception of how much P hurt them in the past and V's perception of how much P made amends in the past did not predict V's perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .345$; $p = .351$. Moreover, there was no significant interaction between either V's perception of how much P hurt them in the past or V's perception of how much P made amends in the past with P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .695$; $p = .704$, or with P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .664$; $p = .680$, in predicting V's perception of the severity of the transgression.

Ancillary Analysis – Additional Victim Traits as Predictors of Victim Perceptions

Ancillary analysis investigated additional measured traits of V as moderators of the relationship between P's perceptions of guilt expression and V's perceptions of severity and belief that P would make amends using the strategy described above. Analogously to the previous model, to control for accuracy, all models include a

composite variable averaging observers' and perpetrators' ratings of incident severity representing objective severity and both facets of P's guilt expression perceptions. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. Significant interactions were probed by examining conditional effects at 1 SD below and above levels of the moderating variable.

Perfectionistic self-presentation. V's perfectionistic self-presentation did not significantly predict their belief that P would make amends, $p = .236$, or their perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .290$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between V's perfectionistic self-presentation and P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .595$, or P's expression of repair motivation in predicting V's belief that P would make amends, $p = .111$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between V's perfectionistic self-presentation and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .629$, or P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .645$, in predicting V's perception of the severity of the transgression.

Authenticity in relationships. V's authenticity in relationships did not significantly predict their belief that P would make amends, $p = .534$, or their perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .192$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between V's authenticity and P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .697$, or repair motivation, $p = .980$, in predicting V's perception of severity. However, there was a significant interaction between V's authenticity and P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $b = -.81$; $t = -2.18$; $p = .033$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends. This interaction is plotted in Figure 4. P's perception of expressing repair motivation predicted V's marginally lower belief that P would make amends for

victims high in authenticity in relationships, $b = -.63$; $t = -1.98$; $p = .052$, and V's marginally higher belief that P would make amends for victims low in authenticity in relationships, $b = .68$; $t = 1.73$; $p = .089$. Moreover, V's authenticity in relationships predicted V's lower belief that P would make amends when P thought they expressed high repair motivation, $b = -2.74$; $t = -2.30$; $p = .025$, but was not a significant predictor of V's belief that P would make amends when P perceived they expressed low repair motivation, $p = .158$. In addition, there was a significant interaction between V's authenticity in relationships and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing, $b = .42$; $t = 2.20$; $p = .031$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends. The interaction is plotted in Figure 5. P's perception of expressing wrongdoing did not predict V's belief that P would make amends for victims low, $p = .130$, or high in authenticity, $p = .137$. V's authenticity in relationships was a better predictor of their belief that P would make amends when perpetrators thought they expressed a lot of wrongdoing, $b = 5.16$; $t = 2.31$; $p = .024$, compared to perpetrators who perceived they expressed little wrongdoing, $b = 4.30$; $t = 2.11$; $p = .038$.

Communal strength. V's communal strength did not significantly predict their belief that P would make amends, $p = .115$, or their perception of the severity of the transgression, $p = .781$. In addition, there was no significant interaction between V's communal strength and P's perceptions of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .463$, or P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .769$, in predicting V's perceptions of severity. Moreover, there was no significant interaction between V's communal strength and P's perception of expressing wrongdoing, $p = .912$, or P's perception of expressing repair motivation, $p = .705$, in predicting V's belief that P would make amends.

Ancillary Analysis – Interaction between V’s Perceptions in Predicting Outcomes

Next, I performed analyses adding V’s perceptions of incident severity and V’s belief that P would make amends and a product term representing the interaction between the two to test the interaction between V’s perceptions on relationship outcomes. All models control for P’s situational and dispositional feelings of prosocial emotions as well as P’s perceptions of their own expression of wrongdoing and repair motivation. Moreover, I controlled for time passed since the incident occurred as reported by the perpetrators. Significant interactions were probed by examining conditional effects at 1 SD below and above levels of the moderating variable.

V’s perceptions of the severity of the transgression and their belief that P would make amends did not significantly interact in predicting their own short-term outcomes, $p = .469$, or long-term outcomes, $p = .277$, and P’s short-term outcomes, $p = .752$. However, there was a significant interaction between V’s perceptions of severity and their belief that P would make amends in predicting P’s long-term outcomes, $b = .14$; $t = 2.18$; $p = .033$. The interaction is plotted in Figure 6. V’s belief that P would make amends was associated with better long-term outcomes for P when V also perceived the incident as highly severe, $b = .43$; $t = 2.79$; $p = .007$, and had no effect on P’s long-term outcomes when V perceived the incident as low in severity, $p = .726$. In addition, V’s perception of the incident’s severity was associated with better long-term outcomes for P when V also highly believed that P would make amends, $b = .23$; $t = 2.44$; $p = .018$, but not when V was low in this belief, $p = .500$. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between V’s perceptions of severity and their belief that P would make amends in predicting V’s forgiveness of P, $b = .07$; $t = 2.95$; $p = .004$. This interaction is plotted in Figure 7. V’s

belief that P would make amends lead to higher forgiveness when V also perceived the incident as highly severe, $b = .33$; $t = 6.27$; $p < .001$, but not when V perceived the incident as low in severity, $p = .113$. In addition, V's perception of the incident's severity was only related to lower forgiveness when V also had a weak belief that P would make amends, $b = -.18$; $t = -4.24$; $p < .001$, but not when V believed strongly that P would make amends, $p = .418$.

Discussion

Results from this study suggest that the primary hypothesis is not supported and perpetrators expression of wrongdoing and repair motivation do not exhibit countervailing effects on personal and relational outcomes through their influence on victims' perceptions. Secondary analysis reveals that communal strength moderates the relationship between perpetrator guilt and their likelihood of perceiving expression of repair motivation. In addition, victim's attachment anxiety moderates the relationship between perpetrators' expression of repair motivation and the victims' belief that the perpetrator would make amends. Ancillary analysis suggests that victims' relationship authenticity also moderates this relationship as well as the relationship between the perpetrators perception of expressing wrongdoing and victim's belief that the perpetrator would make amends. Additionally, ancillary analysis suggests that victims' perceptions of incident severity and their belief that the perpetrator would make amends interact in predicting the perpetrators' long-term perceptions of relationship change and the victims' forgiveness.

Results reveal that feelings of guilt by a perpetrator can lead to expression of wrongdoing and repair motivation. However, these expression facets fail to predict victim

perceptions of severity and victim beliefs that the perpetrator would make amends. Thus, the hypothesized model outlined in Figure 1 is not confirmed. Different relationship outcomes depend on distinctive factors including perpetrator's guilt, perpetrator's guilt expression and victim's perceptions. These effects emerge even after controlling for situational shame and embarrassment and dispositional prosocial emotions, which eliminates the effect of prior established explanations of guilt's mixed effects. This study highlights the importance of distinguishing between perpetrator and victim perceptions. In addition, the analysis reveals a promising new direction for research on guilt expression – investigating the disagreement between perpetrator and victim perceptions as a possible explanation for guilt's mixed effects. Future research should formally examine disagreement between perpetrator and victim as one of the reasons for the mixed effects of guilt found in prior literature (Tangney, 1993). In addition, it should address ways in which this misunderstanding can be eliminated.

The current study confirmed that guilt expression includes expression of wrongdoing and repair motivation. Expressing repair motivation increases the likelihood that victims will forgive perpetrators (Zechmeister et al., 2004) and has been identified as one of the main pathways through which guilt can help signal to a victim that the perpetrator still values their relationship (Nesse, 1990). Thus, it is likely that perpetrators express repair motivation when they want to be forgiven. This repair motivation can include both a communication of a desire to make amends for behavior and expression of continued care for victim despite a transgression (Panseira, 2012). In addition, honesty has been identified as a quality that people desire in their partners as well as try to enact themselves when they feel secure in a relationship (Gillath, Sesko, Shaver & Chun, 2010;

Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) and providing details about one's transgressions is linked to perceptions of honesty (Roggensack & Sillars, 2014). Thus, perpetrators are likely to express wrongdoing in order to reassure their partner that they still possess this desirable quality despite their transgression. Future research should examine specific behaviors through which perpetrators express wrongdoing and repair motivation, the specific motivations that guide these behaviors, and the mechanisms through which they influence forgiveness. In addition, it might be useful to investigate the connection between expression of wrongdoing and the offering of justification as opposed to the offering of an excuse. A meta-analysis on the effects of explanations after transgressions revealed that excuses can be more beneficial than justifications especially when they were given in a context involving relational implications (Shaw, Wild & Colquitt, 2003).

Although feelings of guilt by the perpetrator lead to expression of wrongdoing and repair motivation, perpetrator's reports of guilt expression components were not predictive of the victim's perceptions about the severity of the incident or the victim's belief that the perpetrator would make amends. In fact, perpetrators and victims did not agree on how much the perpetrator expressed wrongdoing and repair motivation. These findings are in line with past research showing that partners do not always agree about the presence of specific relationship-relevant behaviors (Bradbury & Fincham, 1992; McGregor & Holmes, 1999). For example, research on invisible support suggests that romantic partners often disagree regarding whether each member provides support (Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000). Perhaps a similar pattern characterizes expressions of guilt. Future research should address the reason for this disagreement. One possibility is that partners differ in their prototypes or definitions regarding the relevant

behaviors that express wrongdoing and repair motivation. Another possibility is that motivated or egocentric biases alter perceptions of these behaviors. For example, perpetrators may exaggerate the extent to which their own behavior reflected what they intended to convey, and victims may exaggerate the extent to which perpetrators behaved in ways that were consistent with their desires or expectancies. In addition, although analysis controlled for time passed since the identified incident, given that this study depended on participants' recall, it is possible that accuracy is reduced and bias is increased relative to perceptions at the time of the guilt expression.

Given that guilt expression did not predict victim's perceptions, the primary hypothesized model outlined in Figure 1 was not supported. However, analysis revealed that some of the victims' and perpetrators' perceptions were associated with relational outcomes. Perpetrators felt like their relationship was better right after guilt expression and in the long run if they perceived that they expressed a high desire to make amends. This finding is in line with past research suggesting that reconciliatory behaviors after a transgression aid self-forgiveness for the perpetrator (Goffman, 1971) which is related to their personal well-being (Wohl, DeShea & Wahkinney, 2008). In addition, perpetrators and victims' perceptions of positive relationship changes in the long run, victims' perceptions of positive relationship changes in the short-term, and victims' forgiveness depended on whether or not the victim believed the perpetrator would make amends. These findings highlight the importance of expression of amends in apologies for both partners, as suggested by past research (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Moreover, the victim's perception of the incident severity had a negative effect on their forgiveness of the perpetrator in line with findings that transgressions perceived as more severe are

harder to forgive (Fincham, Jackson & Beach, 2005). Furthermore, ancillary analysis revealed that victims' belief that perpetrators would make amends predicted higher victim forgiveness and better perpetrator long-term perceptions of relationship change only when the victim also perceived the incident as relatively severe but not when victims perceived the incident as relatively minor perhaps indicating that perception of amends is important only when the victim considers an incident a serious transgressions. The results emphasize past work suggesting that perspectives of both partners can independently influence relationship outcomes (Gable, Reis & Downey, 2003) and each should be considered. Furthermore, they are particularly important in light of the many personal wellbeing outcomes associated with forgiveness (Fincham & Beach, 2002) and relationship perception (Diener, 1984; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Future research should investigate these patterns while also controlling for the type of transgression committed by the perpetrator. More specifically, prior studies have suggested that apologies might be effective when a perpetrator commits a violation related to competence, while denial might be the preferred strategy after a violation related to integrity (Kim, Dirks, Cooper & Ferrin, 2006; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper & Dirks, 2004). Thus, identifying whether a transgression is related to competence or integrity might illuminate conditional effectiveness of guilt expression strategies.

Secondary analysis revealed that perpetrators' higher in communal feelings towards the victim were more likely to report expressing repair motivation when they felt guilty compared to perpetrators who had lower communal feelings. This finding is in line with prior research implicating communal strength in more enacted pro-relationship behaviors (Mattingly, Oswald & Clark, 2011). In addition, perpetrators higher in

perfectionistic self-presentation were less likely to report expressing wrongdoing. This finding is not surprising in light of research showing that perfectionistic self-presentation is related to avoidance of behavior that can tarnish one's reputation (Hewitt et al., 2003).

In addition, victims' self-esteem was associated with their higher belief that the perpetrator would make amends in line with past research suggesting that people low in self-esteem are less likely to trust their partners (Mikulincer, 1998; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Simpson, 1990). Moreover, victims' attachment anxiety predicted their perception of the severity of the transgression. This finding fits past literature establishing that attachment anxiety is related to exaggerated negative evaluations of conflict (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005). In addition, victims' attachment anxiety influenced their perception that the perpetrator would make amends in a negative direction only when the perpetrator expressed low repair motivation. This pattern suggests that perpetrators' expression of repair motivation after a transgression might act as a buffer to the negative effects of the victim's attachment anxiety. Similar patterns have been established in prior literature demonstrating that people can find ways to reassure their insecure partners and alleviate the negative effects of insecurity by using strategies such as enacting pro-relationship behaviors (Lemay & Dudley, 2011; Simpson & Overall, 2014; Overall et al., 2014). Furthermore, victims' perceptions of their partners' likelihood to make amends in the past were related to their belief that they would make amends for the specific transgression identified for the purpose of this research which is not surprising given that people make judgments about specific situations based on past experiences (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). Additionally, victims high in relationship authenticity were more likely to believe perpetrators would

make amends when perpetrators perceived expressing relatively high wrongdoing. They were also less likely to believe perpetrators would make amends when perpetrators perceived expressing relatively high repair motivation. These results might suggest that victims high in authenticity who have been hurt value details about the transgression and honesty more than repair motivation, which they might consider insincere. These findings are consistent with theorizing on authenticity in relationship suggesting that people high in this trait value presentation of a “true-self” and honesty even when the truth is unpleasant (Lopez & Rice, 2006). Moreover, it is possible that victims high in authenticity assume that their partners are authentic as well when they express wrongdoing given that people often assume their partners are similar to them (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001). On the other hand, victims low in authenticity might project their own lack of insincerity onto their partners and not interpret expression of wrongdoing or repair motivation as signs of honesty. This finding is in line with past research suggesting that people who lack trustworthiness may perceive the same quality in their partners (Neal & Lemay, 2017). Thus, future research should investigate perceptions of honesty as a mediator of the relationship between victim authenticity and perpetrator guilt expression in predicting relational outcomes.

Together, these findings suggest that guilt expression is a complex process between a perpetrator and a victim. Victim perceptions about guilt expression depend on the victim’s traits which can interact with the perpetrators expression, as well as their perceptions of the perpetrators past behaviors. Outcomes, on the other hand, can depend on both partners’ perceptions as well as an interaction between them. Prior research suggests that guilt expression might be most effective in facilitating forgiveness when

perpetrators match its components to the victims' self-construal (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). Thus, integrating victim self-construal future studies on the effectiveness of guilt expression might be a fruitful future direction.

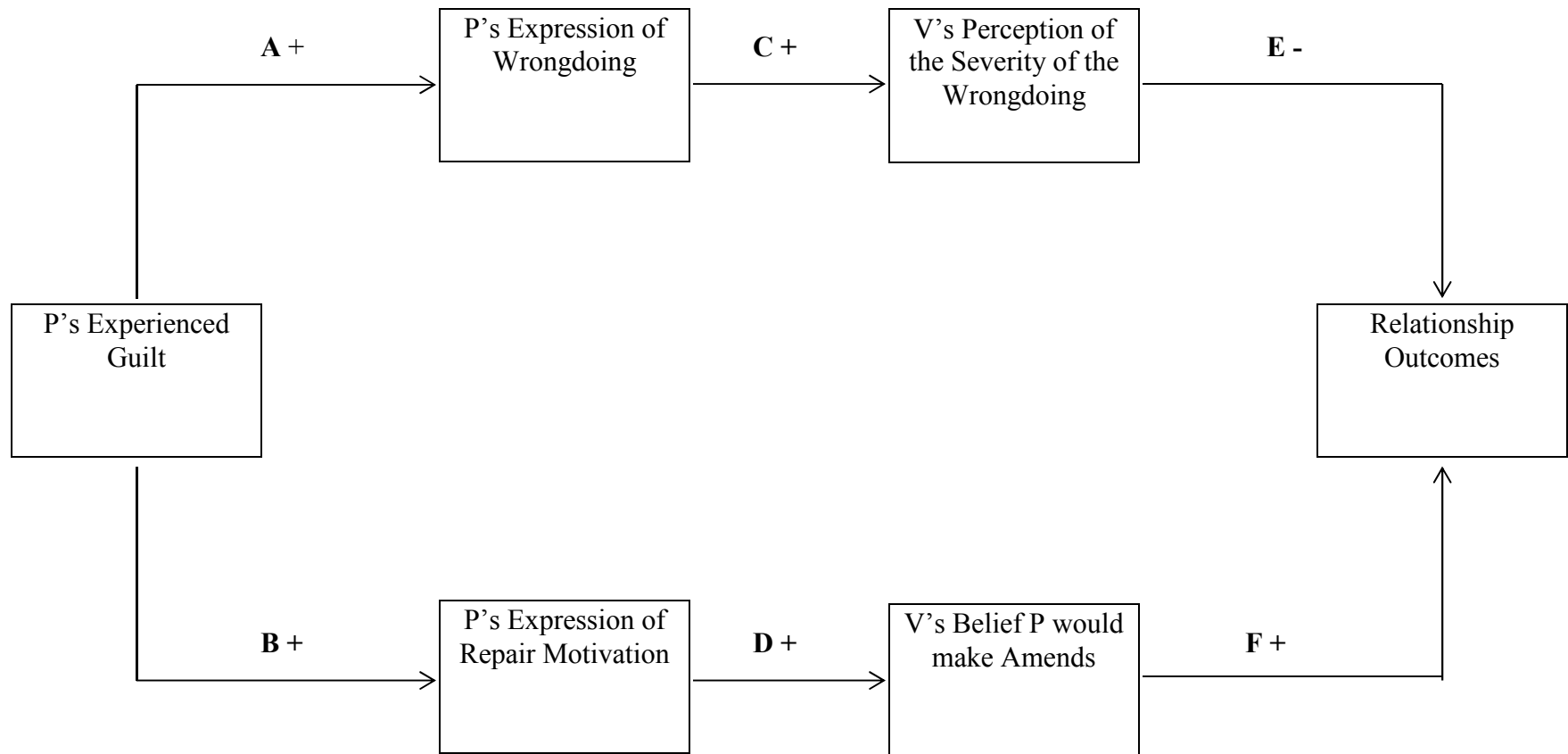
There were some limitations and caveats to the current research. The sample was a convenience sample with a small percentage of males and made up mostly of young adults. Future research should replicate the current study with a more diverse sample. Moreover, a selection bias may have skewed the results, given that guilt expression can lead to relationship dissolution (Hall & Fincham, 2006) and the study only included participants who did not dissolve their relationship. Perhaps consequences of guilt would have appeared more negative if this potential bias were eliminated. In addition, the current study did not use an experimental design to manipulate guilt and observe guilt expression, so no causal references can be drawn. Moreover, to avoid negative consequences for participants' relationships, the study focused on past transgressions. Some of the answers participants gave on questions about the time of transgression might have been biased by events that occurred between the time of the transgression and their lab session, since past research has shown that experiences can bias memories of evaluations given in the past (McFarland & Ross, 1987). Future research should address this problem by using a method like experience sampling allowing for estimation of the immediate reactions of victims and perpetrators. Additionally, the current study relied on recounts of past incidents and perpetrators were instructed to not share any novel information with the victims for ethical purposes (i.e., eliciting communications that would damage relationship). Thus, this design may have constrained our ability to find support for the hypothesized negative effects of expressing wrongdoing on relational

outcomes, as many of those effects might stem from new information shared by the perpetrator during confessions (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1995). Future research should aim to eliminate this limitation. In addition, this study investigated guilt expression by asking perpetrators to identify an incident but treated victims as passive. It is possible, however, that victims often elicit an apology or demand an explanation of a transgression. This might be particularly true for victims high in attachment anxiety who has been shown to engage in hyperactivating strategies, energetic and insistent attempts to elicit proximity, support, intimacy, and love from an attachment figure (Cassidy & Kobak, 1998), which might take the form of demanding an apology or an expression of repair motivation. Moreover, prior research suggests that the voluntariness with which an apology is given has an effect on the victim's perception of the perpetrator (Jehle, Miller, Kemmelmeier & Maskaly, 2012). Thus, future research should explicitly address the role of the victim in the process of guilt expression in order to present a more holistic view. Despite these limitations, the current study has noteworthy strengths. The study included the points of view of both perpetrators and victims allowing comparison of their evaluations. Moreover, the current study examined multiple relationship outcomes in order to show replicability. Finally, the study controlled for known explanations of the mixed effects of guilt in order to allow for an explanation above and beyond them.

Although the primary model proposed was not supported, the current research provides some valuable insight into the perceptions of perpetrators and victims taking part in guilt expression, and offers a basis for further investigation of the disagreement between victim and perpetrator about guilt expression as an explanation for the mixed effects of guilt found in prior research (Tangney, 1993)

Figures

Figure 1. Effect of Interpersonal Guilt on Relationship Outcomes



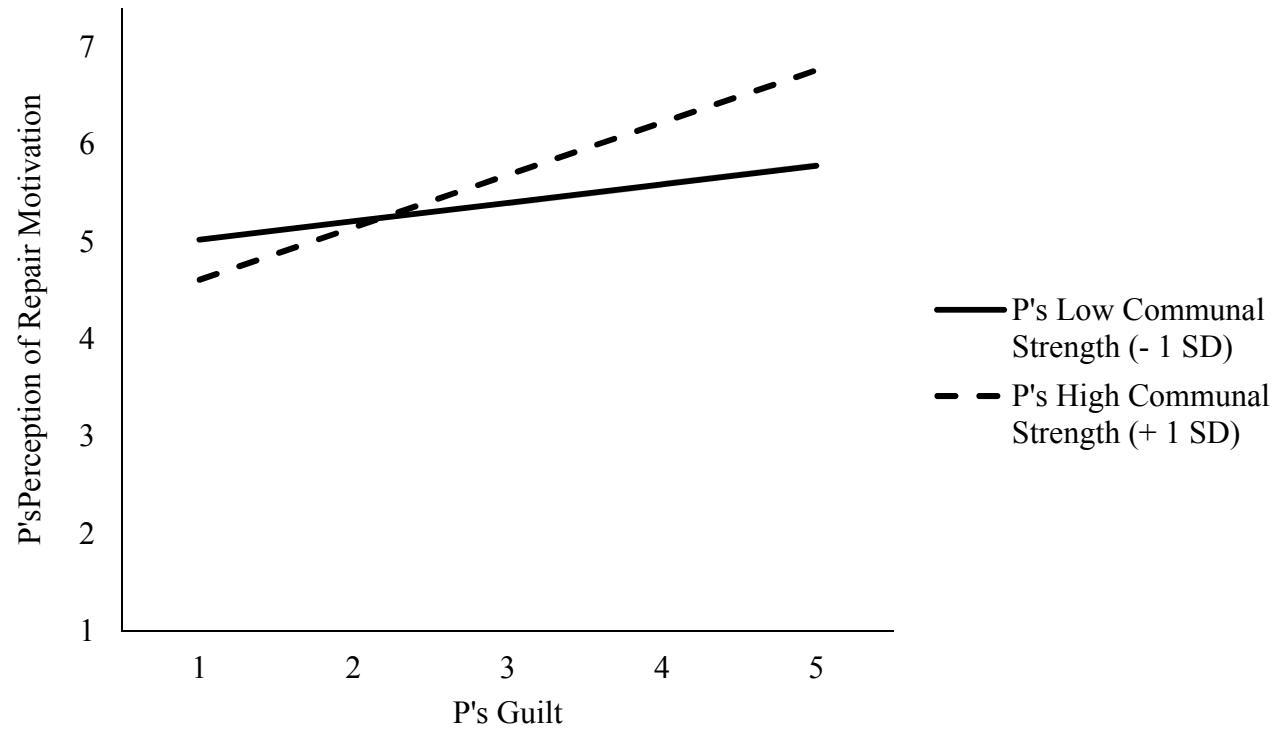


Figure 2. Interaction between P's Guilt and Their Communal Feelings Towards V in Predicting P's Perception of Expressing of Repair Motivation

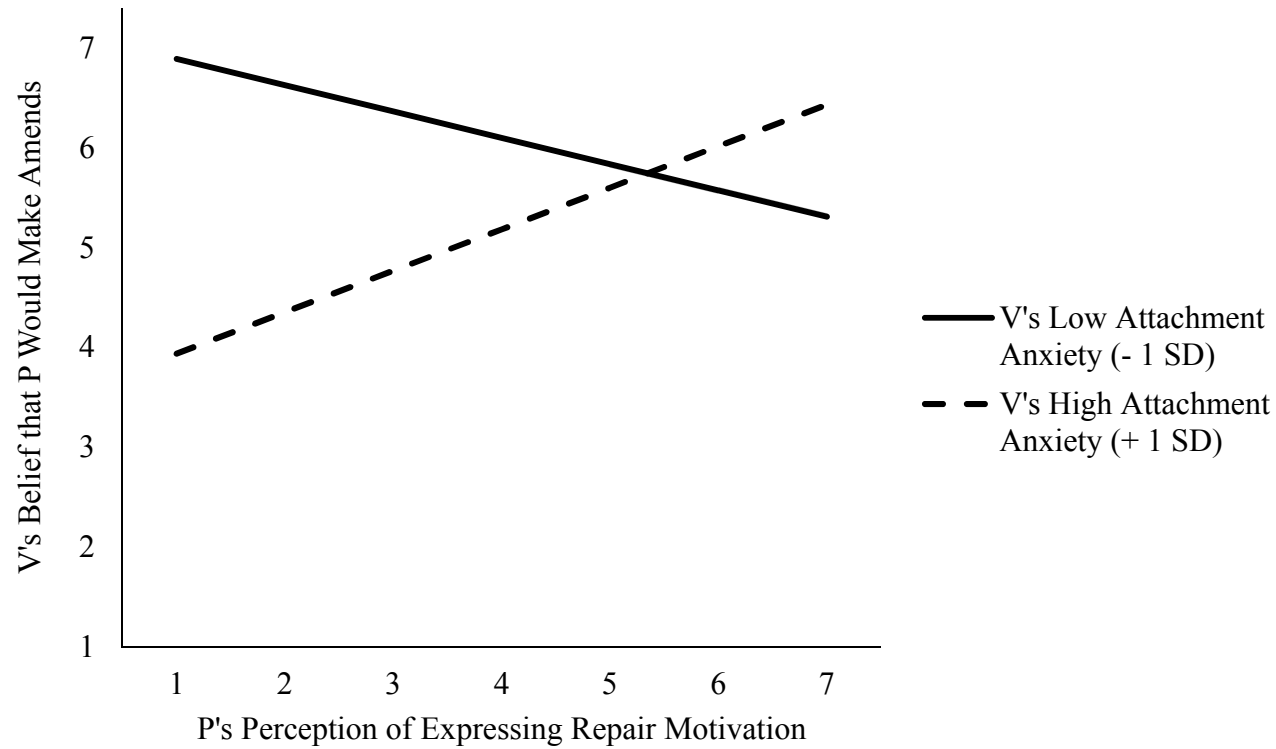


Figure 3. Interaction between V's Attachment Anxiety and P's Perception of Expressing Repair Motivation in Predicting V's Belief P Would Make Amends

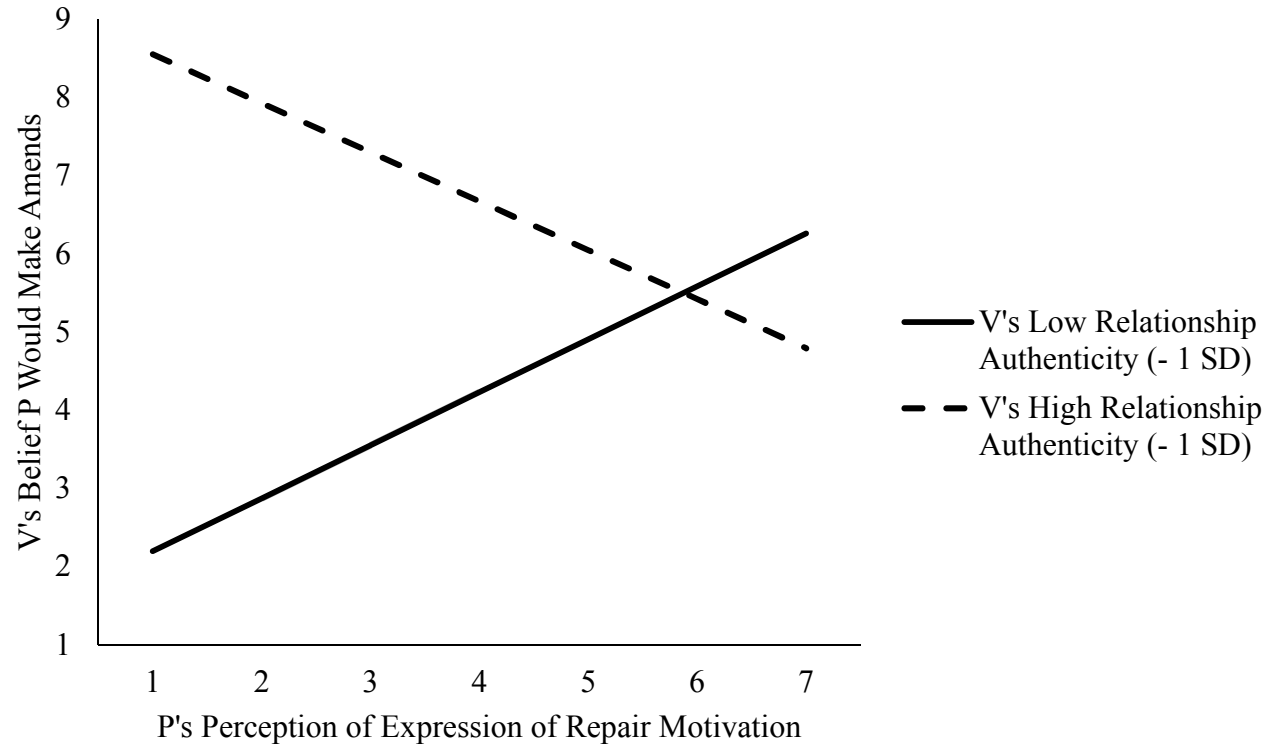


Figure 4. Interaction between V's Authenticity in Relationships and P's Perception of Expressing Repair Motivation in Predicting V's Belief P Would Make Amends

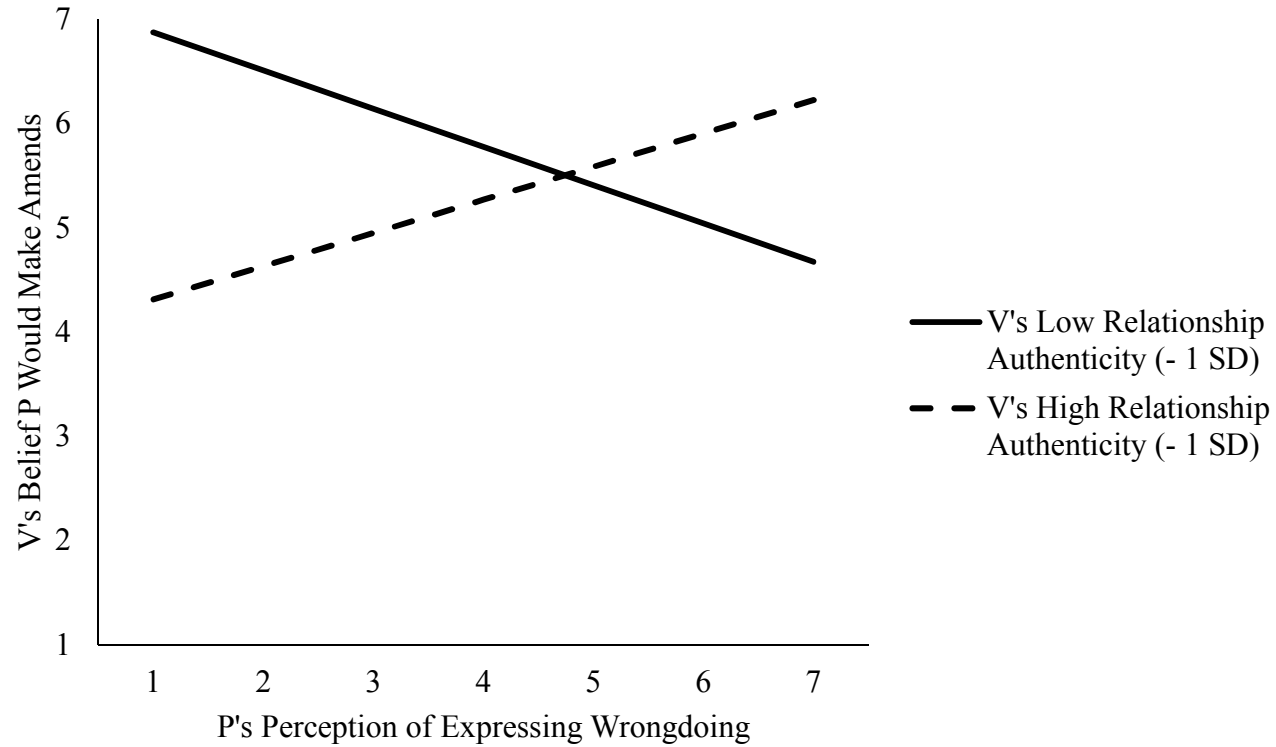


Figure 5. Interaction between V's Authenticity in Relationships and P's Perception of Expressing Wrongdoing in Predicting V's Belief P Would Make Amends

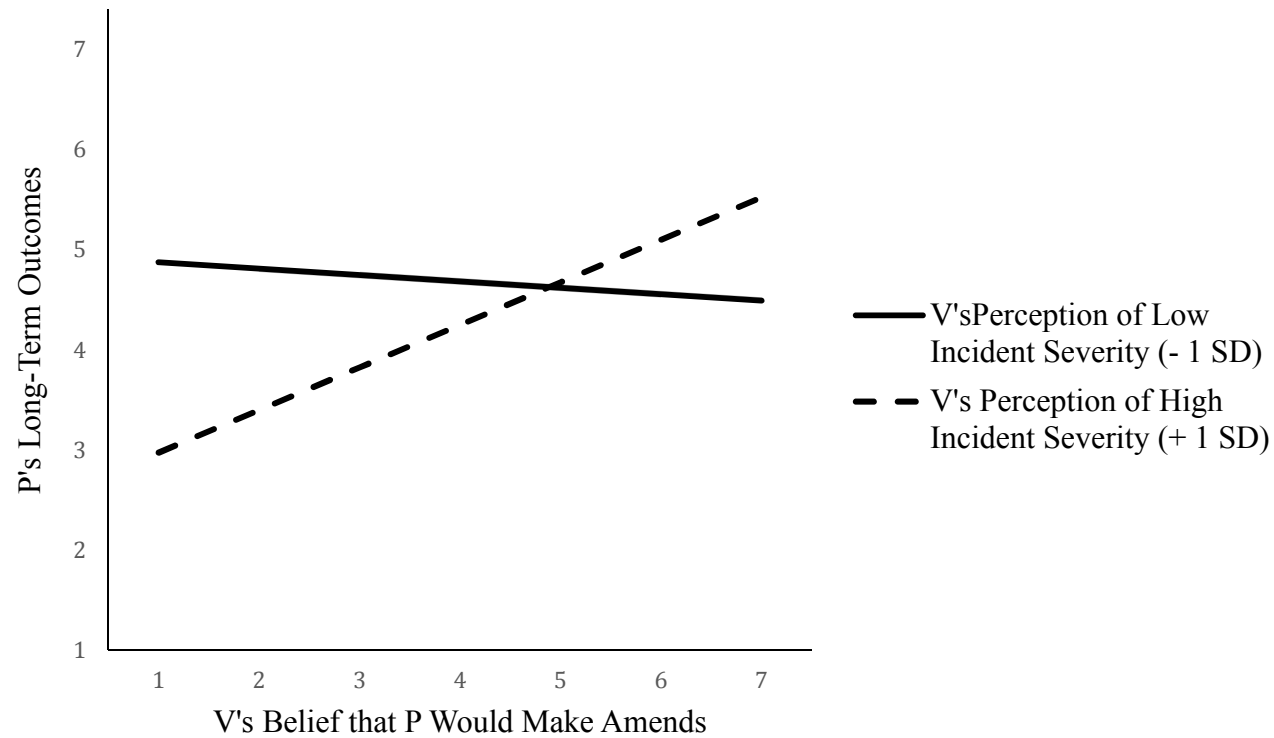


Figure 6. Interaction between V's Perceptions of Incident Severity and V's Belief that P Would Make Amends in Predicting P's Long-Term Outcomes

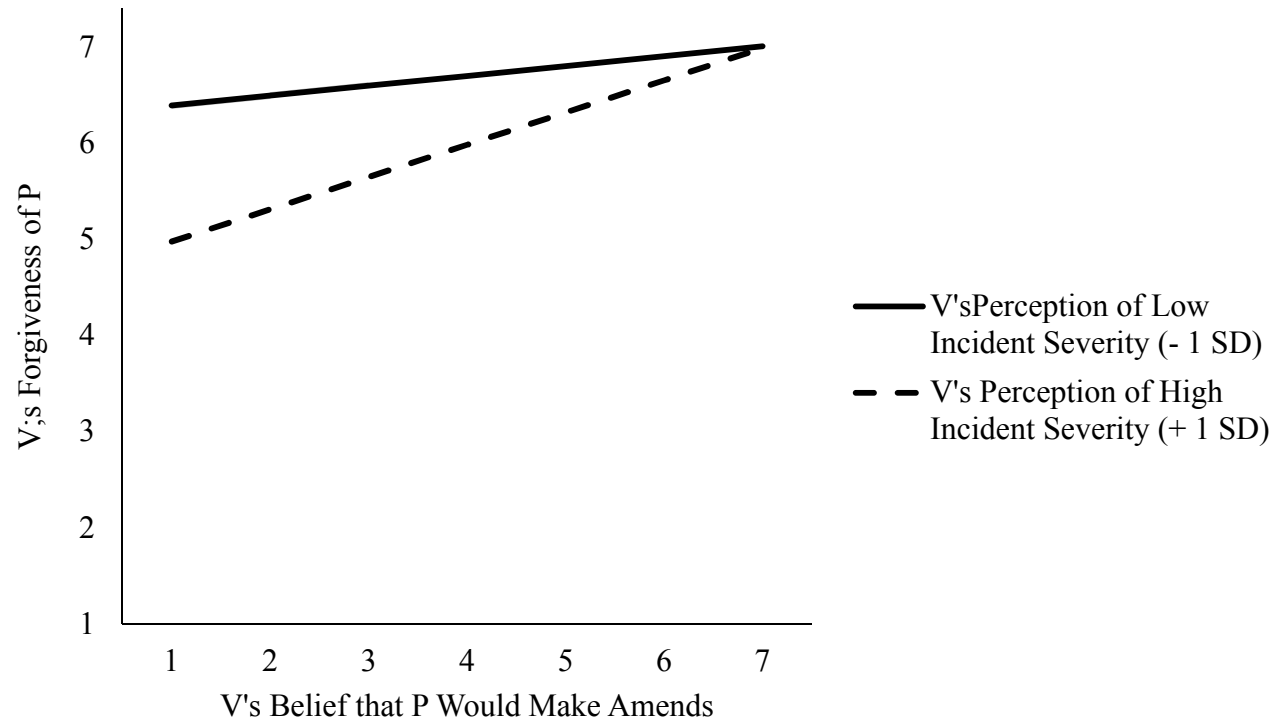


Figure 7. Interaction between V's Perceptions of Incident Severity and V's Belief that P Would Make Amends in Predicting V's Forgiveness

Tables

Table 1

Correlations Among Variables in Proposed Model

| | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|-------|------------------|--------|------|--------|-----|-----|
| 1. P's Guilt | - | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. P's expression of WD | .42*** | - | | | | | | | | |
| 3. P's expression of RM | .45*** | .52*** | - | | | | | | | |
| 4. V's impression of severity | .21 [†] | .22 [†] | .31** | - | | | | | | |
| 5. V's belief that P will make amends | .07 | .01 | -.00 | .01 | - | | | | | |
| 6. P's long-term outcomes | -.08 | .09 | .31** | .18 | .19 [†] | - | | | | |
| 7. P's short-term outcomes | -.01 | -.02 | .16 | -.02 | .11 | .63*** | - | | | |
| 8. V's long-term outcomes | -.02 | .08 | .03 | -.02 | .51*** | .30** | .20* | - | | |
| 9. V's short-term outcomes | -.07 | .07 | -.03 | .04 | .44*** | .26* | .17* | .90*** | - | |
| 10. V's forgiveness of P | -.07 | -.10 | -.01 | -.27* | .49*** | .11 | .05 | .43*** | .34 | - |

Note. [†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$; WD = wrongdoing; RM = repair motivation

Table 2a *Loadings for all of P's Guilt Expression Subscales*

| Subscale | Factor Loadings | |
|----------|-----------------|---------|
| | Factor1 | Factor2 |
| Mistake | .922 | .199 |
| Admit | .875 | .238 |
| Detail | .836 | .304 |
| Care | .113 | .880 |
| Amend | .339 | .855 |
| Repeat | .530 | .632 |

Table 2b *Loadings for P's Guilt Expression Subscales without Repeat*

| Subscale | Factor Loadings | |
|----------|-----------------|---------|
| | Factor1 | Factor2 |
| Mistake | .924 | .161 |
| Admit | .886 | .243 |
| Detail | .848 | .312 |
| Care | .141 | .923 |
| Amend | .358 | .824 |

Table 3 *P's Guilt as a Predictor of P's Guilt Expression Style*

| Predictor | Outcome | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| | P's W Expression | | | P's RM Expression | | |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>T</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
| P's Situational Guilt | .31 | 2.21 | .031 | .42 | 3.45 | .001 |
| P's Situational Shame | .14 | .67 | .505 | .11 | .61 | .542 |
| P's Situational Embarrassment | -.11 | -.72 | .476 | -.10 | -.73 | .468 |
| Incident Severity | .08 | .93 | .354 | .06 | .77 | .447 |
| P's Dispositional Guilt | .26 | 1.30 | .197 | -.13 | -.74 | .462 |
| P's Dispositional Shame | -.05 | -.17 | .868 | .15 | .59 | .560 |
| P's Dispositional embarrassment | -.14 | -.65 | .519 | -.05 | -.27 | .788 |
| P's Report of Time Since Incident | .00 | .34 | .736 | -.01 | -.81 | .420 |
| Note. W = wrongdoing; RM = repair motivation | | | | | | |

Table 4. *V's Perceptions as Predictors of Relationship Outcomes*

| Predictor | Outcome | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | P's SO | P's LO | V's SO | V's LO | Forgiveness |
| | <i>b</i> (<i>t</i>) | <i>b</i> (<i>t</i>) | <i>b</i> (<i>t</i>) | <i>b</i> (<i>t</i>) | <i>b</i> (<i>t</i>) |
| P's Situational Guilt | -.08 (-.37) | -.39 (-2.12)* | -.19 (-.85) | -.23 (-1.13) | -.11 (-1.62) |
| P's Situational Shame | -.44 (-1.40) | -.23 (-.91) | -.50 (-1.67) | -.27 (-.99) | -.01 (-.12) |
| P's Situational Embarrassment | .14 (.57) | .21 (1.06) | .08 (.35) | .08 (.37) | -.02 (=.23) |
| P's Dispositional Guilt | .23 (.74) | -.07 (-.28) | .42 (1.38) | .35 (1.27) | .11 (1.20) |
| P's Dispositional Shame | -.49 (-1.15) | -.14 (-.42) | .23 (.56) | .04 (.12) | -.21 (-1.63) |
| P's Dispositional Embarrassment | .21 (.66) | .38 (1.43) | -.12 (-.39) | .08 (.26) | .19 (1.93) [†] |
| P's W Expression | -.16 (-.76) | .03 (.16) | .17 (.83) | .11 (.62) | -.08 (-1.25) |
| P's RM Expression | .47 (1.98) [†] | .60 (3.12)** | -.01 (-.04) | .13 (.63) | .15 (2.17)* |
| V's Severity Perception | -.05 (-.47) | .11 (1.40) | 0.03 (.30) | -.04 (-.43) | -.09 (-2.91)** |
| V's Belief in Amends | .14 (.92) | .22 (1.79) [†] | .69 (4.68)*** | .71 (5.32)*** | .24 (5.34)*** |
| P's Report of Time Since Incident | .01 (.74) | -.01 (-.31) | .04 (2.04)* | .03 (1.94) [†] | .01 (2.26)* |

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Note. *W* = wrongdoing; *RM* = repair motivation; *SO* = short-term outcomes; *LO* = long-term outcomes

Appendices

Appendix A

Trait Self-Esteem Measure

(Rosenberg, 1965)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements

using the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
2. At times I think I am not good at all. R
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. R
6. I certainly feel useless at times. R
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure. R
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Scoring: Items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all ten items and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

Appendix B

Dispositional Guilt, Shame and Embarrassment Measure

(procedure adapted from Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert & Barlow, 1998)

Describe how often you feel each of the following emotions in your daily life:

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (Not at All) | | | | (Always) |

Guilt

1. Guilty
2. Regretful
3. Blameworthy
4. Repentant
5. Remorseful

Shame

6. Ashamed
7. Humiliated
8. Disgraced
9. Mortified
10. Disappointed with myself

Embarrassment

11. Embarrassed
12. Uncomfortable
13. Self-conscious

14. Blushful

15. Awkward

Scoring: Scores were summed for all five items for each emotion and items were averaged for each emotion. Higher scores indicate dispositional feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment respectively.

Appendix C

Own and Partner Transgression History Measures

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about your partner generally using the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

Own Transgression History:

1. I have often hurt my partner.
2. I do many harmful things towards my partner.
3. I often treat my partner poorly.
4. I feel like I cause my partner a lot of pain.
5. I very rarely cause my partner distress. R

Partner Transgression History:

1. My partner has often hurt me.
2. My partner does many harmful things towards me.
3. My partner often treats me poorly.
4. I feel like my partner causes me a lot of pain.
5. My partner very rarely causes me distress. R

Scoring: For each measure, items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all five items and averaged. Higher scores indicate history of hurting partner often and history of being hurt by partner often.

Own Amend History:

1. I always make amends for my hurtful actions towards my partner.
2. I try to make up for any distress I might have caused my partner.
3. I put in extra effort after I have done my partner wrong.
4. I usually change in a more positive direction after I express guilt towards my partner.
5. I don't usually repeat behaviors I have apologized to my partner about.

Partner Amend History:

1. My partner always makes amends for their hurtful actions towards me.
2. My partner tries to make up for any distress they might have caused me.
3. My partner puts in extra effort after they have done me wrong.
4. My partner usually changes in a more positive direction they express guilt towards me.
5. My partner doesn't usually repeat behaviors they have apologized to me about.

Scoring: For each measure, scores were summed for all five items and averaged.

Higher scores indicate history of hurting partner often and history of being hurt by partner often.

Appendix D

Perfectionistic Self-Presentation

(Hewitt et al., 2003)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
using the following scale:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| | | | | | | | | (Strongly Agree) |
| (Strongly Disagree) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | It is okay to show others that I am not perfect R | | | | | | | |
| 2. | I judge myself based on the mistakes I make in front of other people | | | | | | | |
| 3. | I will do almost anything to cover up a mistake | | | | | | | |
| 4. | Errors are much worse if they are made in public rather than in private | | | | | | | |
| 5. | I try always to present a picture of perfection | | | | | | | |
| 6. | It would be awful if I made a fool of myself in front of others | | | | | | | |
| 7. | If I seem perfect, others will see me more positively | | | | | | | |
| 8. | I brood over mistakes that I have made in front of others | | | | | | | |
| 9. | I never let others know how hard I work on things | | | | | | | |
| 10. | I would like to appear more competent than I really am | | | | | | | |
| 11. | It doesn't matter if there is a flaw in my looks R | | | | | | | |
| 12. | I do not want people to see me do something unless I am very good at | | | | | | | |
| 13. | I should always keep my problems to myself | | | | | | | |
| 14. | I should solve my own problems rather than admit them to others | | | | | | | |
| 15. | I must appear to be in control of my actions at all times | | | | | | | |
| 16. | It is okay to admit mistakes to others R | | | | | | | |

17. It is important to act perfectly in social situations
18. I don't really care about being perfectly groomed R
19. Admitting failure to others is the worst possible thing
20. I hate to make errors in public
21. I try to keep my faults to myself
22. I do not care about making mistakes in public R
23. I need to be seen as perfectly capable in everything I do
24. Failing at something is awful if other people know about it
25. It is very important that I always appear to be "on top of things"
26. I must always appear to be perfect
27. I strive to look perfect to others

Scoring: Items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all ten items and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher perfectionistic self-presentation.

Appendix E

Measurement of Communal Strength

(Mills et al., 2004)

Keeping in mind your relationship with the person you came in the lab with, answer the following questions. Your answers will remain confidential.

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 0 | 100 |
| (Not at all) | (Extremely) |

1. How far would you be willing to go to visit your partner?
2. How happy do you feel when doing something that helps your partner?
3. How large a benefit would you be likely to give to your partner?
4. How large a cost would you incur to meet a need of your partner?
5. How readily can you put the needs of your partner out of your thoughts? R
6. How high a priority for you is meeting the needs of your partner?
7. How reluctant would you be to sacrifice for your partner? R
8. How much would you be willing to give up to benefit your partner?
9. How far would you go out of your way to do something for your partner?
10. How easily could you accept not helping your partner?

Scoring: Items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all ten items and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher communal strength in relationship with partner.

Appendix F

Experiences in Close Relationships

(Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998)

The following statements concern how you generally feel in close relationships (e.g., with romantic partners, close friends, or family members). Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down.
2. I worry about being rejected or abandoned.
3. I am very comfortable being close to other people. R
4. I worry a lot about my relationships.
5. Just when someone starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
6. I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.
7. I get uncomfortable when someone wants to be very close to me.
8. I worry a fair amount about losing my close relationship partners.
9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.
10. I often wish that close relationship partners' feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.
11. I want to get close to others, but I keep pulling back.
12. I want to get very close to others, and this sometimes scares them away.
13. I am nervous when another person gets too close to me.
14. I worry about being alone.

15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with others. R
16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
17. I try to avoid getting too close to others.
18. I need a lot of reassurance that close relationship partners really care about me.
19. I find it relatively easy to get close to others. R
20. Sometimes I feel that I force others to show more feeling, more commitment to our relationship than they otherwise would.
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on close relationship partners.
22. I do not often worry about being abandoned. R
23. I prefer not to be too close to others.
24. If I can't get a relationship partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
25. I tell my close relationship partners just about everything. R
26. I find that my partners don't want to get as close as I would like.
27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with close others. R
28. When I don't have close others around, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
29. I feel comfortable depending on others. R
30. I get frustrated when my close relationship partners are not around as much as I would like.
31. I don't mind asking close others for comfort, advice, or help. R
32. I get frustrated if relationship partners are not available when I need them.
33. It helps to turn to close others in times of need. R
34. When other people disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.

35. I turn to close relationship partners for many things, including comfort and reassurance. R

36. I resent it when my relationship partners spend time away from me.

Scoring: Items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all odd items and averaged to get an attachment avoidance index. Higher scores indicate higher attachment avoidance. Scores were summed for all even items to get an attachment anxiety index. Higher scores indicate higher attachment anxiety.

Appendix G

Authenticity in Relationships Scale

(selected items from Lopez & Rice, 2006)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
about yourself in general with your friends and close others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. I would rather be the person my close others want me to be than who I really am.

R

2. I'd rather my close others have a positive view of me than a completely accurate
one. R

3. To avoid conflict in our relationships, I will sometimes tell close others what I
think they want to hear even if it's not true. R

4. I purposefully hide my true feelings about some things in order to avoid upsetting
my close others. R

5. I would rather have my close others abandon me than not know who I really am.

6. If my close others have a positive but inaccurate understanding of me, I correct it,
even if this action may lower their opinion of me.

7. I answer my close others' questions about me honestly and fully.

8. It is necessary for me that my close others know me as I know myself.

9. I am totally myself when I am with my close others.

10. I consistently tell my close others the real reasons and motivations behind my
behaviors.

- 11. My life is an "open book" for my close others to read.
- 12. There are times when I feel like I'm being a "fake" with my close others. R
- 13. I would rather upset my close others than be someone who I am not.
- 14. Sometimes I feel like I am two different people - one when I am around close others and another when I am by myself. R

Scoring: Items marked R were reverse scored. Scores were summed for all items and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher authenticity in relationships

Appendix H

Situational Guilt, Shame and Embarrassment Measure

(procedure adapted from Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert & Barlow, 1998)

Describe how strongly you experienced the following emotions towards your
partner **during the identified incident.**

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (Not at All) | | | | (Extremely) |

Guilt

1. Guilty
2. Regretful
3. Blameworthy
4. Repentant
5. Remorseful

Shame

6. Ashamed
7. Humiliated
8. Disgraced
9. Mortified
10. Disappointed with myself

Embarrassment

11. Embarrassed
12. Uncomfortable
13. Self-conscious

14. Blushful

15. Awkward

Scoring: Scores were summed for all five items for each emotion and items were averaged for each emotion. Higher scores indicate situational feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment respectively.

Appendix I

Transgression Severity Measure

(adapted from McCullough, Root & Cohen, 2006)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
regarding the identified incident.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. The incident was painful.
2. The incident was severe.
3. The incident was hurtful.
4. The incident was serious.

Scoring: Scores were summed for all items and averaged. Higher scores indicate
higher perceptions of severity.

Appendix J

Measure of Expression of Wrongdoing by Perpetrator

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
regarding the identified incident.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

Perpetrator:

Detail

1. I talked about my negative behavior.
2. I shared details about my transgression.
3. I described vividly exactly what I did.
4. I spent a long time talking about the specifics of my wrongdoing.
5. I gave my partner as much information as possible about the transgression.

Admit

1. I admitted my wrongdoing to my partner.
2. I confessed what was making me feel guilty to my partner.
3. I discussed my wrongdoing with my partner.
4. I told my partner the truth about what I did.
5. I professed my transgression to my partner.

Mistake

1. I explained in detail that I understood the fault of my transgression.
2. I admitted that what I did was wrong.
3. I shared that I knew I made a mistake.

4. I conveyed that I knew that my transgression was harmful.
5. I made clear that I was aware that what I did was not right.

Victim:

Detail

1. My partner talked about their negative behavior.
2. My partner shared details about their transgression.
3. My partner described vividly exactly what he/she did.
4. My partner spent a long time talking about the specifics of his/her wrongdoing.
5. My partner gave me as much information as possible about the transgression.

Admit

1. My partner admitted their wrongdoing to me.
2. My partner confessed what was making them feel guilty to me.
3. My partner discussed their wrongdoing with me.
4. My partner told me the truth about what they did.
5. My partner professed their transgression to me.

Mistake

1. My partner explained in detail that they understood the fault of their transgression.
2. My partner admitted that what he/she did was wrong.
3. My partner shared that they knew they made a mistake.
4. My partner conveyed that they knew that their transgression was harmful.

Scoring: For each partner, all fifteen items were summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher perception of expression of wrongdoing.

Appendix K

Measure of Expression of Repair Motivation by Perpetrator

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
regarding the identified incident.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

Perpetrator:

Amends

6. I promised to change my behavior towards my partner.
7. I promised to make amends.
8. I expressed a desire to compensate my partner for my transgression.
9. I assured my partner that I would make up for the wrongdoing.
10. I implied that my behavior was going to be more positive in the future.

Care

1. I assured my partner I still cared about them.
2. I assured my partner I still cared about our relationship.
3. I expressed concern for my partner's welfare.
4. I expressed appreciation for my partner.
5. I made sure my partner knew I still valued them.

Repeat

1. I promised I wouldn't repeat the behavior.
2. I assured my partner the behavior would not occur again.
3. My partner said that this was the last time this behavior would occur.

4. I expressed desire to stop repeating the behavior.
5. I reassured my partner the behavior was an accident.

Victim:

Amends

11. My partner promised to change their behavior towards me.
12. My partner promised to make amends.
13. My partner expressed a desire to compensate me for their transgression.
14. My partner assured me that they would make up for the wrongdoing.
15. My partner implied that their behavior was going to be more positive in the future.

Care

1. My partner assured me partner they still cared about me.
2. My partner assured me partner they still cared about our relationship.
3. My partner expressed concern for my welfare.
4. My partner expressed appreciation for me.
5. My partner made sure I knew they still valued me.

Repeat

1. My partner promised they wouldn't repeat the behavior.
2. My partner assured me the behavior would not occur again.
3. My partner said that this was the last time this behavior would occur..
4. My partner expressed desire to stop repeating this behavior.
5. My partner reassured me the behavior was an accident.

Scoring: For each partner, items from Amend and Care subscales were summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate higher perception of expression of repair motivation.

Appendix L

Measure of Victim's Belief that Partner Would make Amends

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements
regarding the identified incident.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

Perpetrator:

1. My partner believed that the transgression wouldn't occur again.
2. My partner believed that my negative behavior would not be repeated.
3. My partner felt confident that my negative behavior would stop.
4. My partner felt confident that my behavior would be less negative in the future.
5. My partner trusted my behavior would change in a more positive direction.
6. My partner realized that I was willing to make up for what I had done.
7. My partner knew I would put in extra effort to make up for my transgression.
8. My partner knew that I would treat him/her more positively in the future.

Victim:

1. I believed that the transgression wouldn't occur again.
2. I believed that his/her negative behavior would not be repeated.
3. I felt confident that his/her negative behavior would stop.
4. I felt confident that his/her behavior would be less negative in the future.
5. I trusted his/her behavior would change in a more positive direction.
6. I realized that he/she was willing to make up for what he/she had done.

7. I knew he/she would put in extra effort to make up for his/her transgression.

8. I knew that he/she would treat me more positively in the future.

Scoring: For each partner, items were summed and averaged. For victim, higher scores indicate higher belief that perpetrator would make amends. For perpetrators, higher scores indicate perception of higher the victim's belief that they would make amends.

Appendix M

Measure of Short-Term Outcomes

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding the incident you read about IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. I am more satisfied with my relationship as a result of this incident.
2. I feel closer to my partner as a result of this incident.
3. I am happier with my relationship as a result of this incident.
4. My partner is more satisfied with our relationship as a result of this incident.
5. My partner feels closer to me as a result of this incident.
6. My partner is happier with our relationship as a result of this incident.
7. Our relationship is stronger as a result of this incident.
8. Our relationship has improved as a result of this incident.
9. Our relationship is happier as a result of this incident.

Scoring: Items were summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate better short-term outcomes.

Appendix N

Measure of Long-Term Outcomes

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding the incident you read about when thinking about it NOW.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Strongly Disagree)

(Strongly Agree)

1. I am more satisfied with my relationship as a result of this incident.
2. I feel closer to my partner as a result of this incident.
3. I am happier with my relationship as a result of this incident.
4. My partner is more satisfied with our relationship as a result of this incident.
5. My partner feels closer to me as a result of this incident.
6. My partner is happier with our relationship as a result of this incident.
7. Our relationship is stronger as a result of this incident.
8. Our relationship has improved as a result of this incident.
9. Our relationship is happier as a result of this incident.

Scoring: Items were summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate better long-term outcomes.

Appendix O

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale

(McCullough et al.,1998)

For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings about
your partner.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| (Strongly Disagree) | | | | | | (Strongly Agree) |

1. I'll make him/her pay. R
2. I keep as much distance between us as possible. R
3. I wish that something bad would happen to him/her. R
4. I live as if he/she doesn't exist/isn't around. R
5. I don't trust him/her. R
6. I want him/her to get what he/she deserves. R
7. I find it difficult to act warmly toward him/her. R
8. I avoid him/her. R
9. I am going to get even. R
10. I cut off the relationship with him/her. R
11. I want to see him/her hurt and miserable. R
12. I withdraw from him/her. R

Scoring: All items were reverse scored summed and averaged. Higher scores indicate more forgiveness.

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¹ There was a significant interaction between the perpetrators' gender and their feelings of guilt in predicting their own short-term outcomes, $b = .85$; $t = 2.52$; $p = .015$, such that feelings of guilt were associated with worse own short-term outcomes for male perpetrators, $b = .64$; $t = 2.18$; $p = .033$, but not female perpetrators, $p = .386$. Male perpetrators who felt relatively high guilt experienced better short-term outcomes than female perpetrators who felt relatively high guilt, $b = 1.12$; $t = 2.12$; $p = .031$, but there was no gender difference for perpetrators who felt relatively low guilt, $p = .203$.

² There was a significant interaction between the victims' gender and their perceptions of incident severity in predicting the perpetrators' short-term outcomes, b

= -.50; $t = -2.14$; $p = .037$, such that victim's perception of incident severity were associated with better perpetrator short-term outcomes for female perpetrators, $b = .83$; $t = 2.42$; $p = .020$, but not male perpetrators, $p = .106$. Victim gender was not related to perpetrator short-term outcomes either for victim's perceiving low, $p = .356$, or high, $p = .958$, incident severity.

³ There was a significant interaction between relationship type and victims' belief that perpetrator would make amends in predicting victims' forgiveness of the perpetrator, $b = -.28$; $t = -3.23$; $p = .002$, such that victims' belief that the perpetrator would make amends was a worse predictor of victims' higher forgiveness of the perpetrator for platonic relationships (friendships and roommate relationships), $b = .10$; $t = 1.83$; $p = .072$, compared to romantic relationships $b = .38$; $t = 6.03$; $p < .001$. Victims in romantic relationship were more likely to forgive their partner than victims in platonic relationships when victims' belief that the perpetrator would make amends was high, $b = -.64$; $t = -2.32$ $p = .020$, but not when that belief was low, $p = .998$.